

*The Sociologist  
And Social Change  
In India Today*

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To

teacher

PRASANTA CHANDRA MAHALANOBIS

who taught me

the “what” and “how” of scientific investigation





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Chapter 1 of this book is based on the paper published in the *Sociological Bulletin* (Bombay) in 1962 under the title "Sociologist and Social Change in India Today"

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Chapter 3 refers largely to a paper entitled *Economic Growth and the Sociology of Industrial Location*, which I wrote for a seminar sponsored by the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, and held in Delhi in August 1964.

Chapter 5 is based on a report, entitled *Refugees in Calcutta*, which I submitted to the Centre for Urban Studies at University College, London, in 1963. The report was prepared on the basis of an enquiry sponsored by the Centre.

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THE AUTHOR



# Foreword

In India today all serious-minded people are deeply stirred by the problems and the process of change taking place in our country through her planned course of development. Also, although not always stated explicitly, this remains the central objective behind the Five-Year Plans brought out by the Government, and the public or semi-public activities undertaken through various programmes and projects. Because the crux of the issue is how *social change* can be so induced that society will not have to be fed continuously from "above", instead, the people themselves will have to take up the matter. For only in that way can the desired course of development in India be comprehensive and consistent.

The motivation of the people to change in the desired direction and at the decided tempo thus becomes the corner-stone of all attempts towards planning and development. But the method of motivation of the people accordingly still remains an open question.

Possibly, in the first flush of enthusiasm, the planners thought that if conditions were created for the economic development of India, social change would follow *ipso facto*. A well-known expert even went so far as to state that a steel town would produce an unprecedented upheaval in an area over a number of square miles ! But is that our experience concerning the recently established steel towns of Bhilai, Durgapur and Rourkela or even in reference to the much older steel-town ?

Jamshedpur is there for half a century. In the town itself the course of material development and the consequent cultural attainment appear prodigious. But behind the veneer of a high order of material culture, is there any significant shift in the social organization and the ideological orientation of the people from what is traditionally ordained for India at large ? Moreover, what would one encounter even in the field of material culture (that is, as referring to *cultural change* instead of to *social change per se*, if one steps out of the town and wanders into the surrounding territory ?

It follows that to draw a causal relation between economic and social changes may not be warranted at this stage of our knowledge. On the other hand, we are told that social inertia is telling upon the proper functioning of industrial undertaking through regional or caste-wise discrimination in personnel selection, because of seasonal migration of even skilled workers (and employees holding responsible positions) in manufacturing establishments to their ancestral place of residence, etc. And it is also reported that in many other ways regionalism and parochialism, caste and the joint family outlook, etc., are hindering the implementation of the planned programme for India's development.

Obviously, we have not yet been able to identify the *soft spots* in the social organism we are dealing with ; while the facts show that without such an identification we shall not be able to crystallize our vision from sporadic expression of progress to the "social formation" which is to be the forebearer of the desired course of change in society. Our immediate task, therefore, is to distinguish those vulnerable regions of the social structure through which we may be able to break through the impasse and effect the stipulated course of change.

But the sands of time are running out ; and as we have not yet been able to hit the bull's eye, bold but uncritical assertions are incessantly showered upon us to confuse further the issue at stake. For example, the viewpoint that is becoming forceful these days is that merely the spread of education among the masses would motivate them to participate and eventually to take over the leadership in the planned course of India's social development.

No doubt, this measure is of immense intrinsic worth and also of considerable ancillary importance to the problem under reference. But it bypasses the central issue all the same. For, time consuming though it is, this measure might have been given the topmost priority in the planned programme, provided there were reasons to believe that it would deliver the goods. Investigations, however, have shown that the "educated people" are not always the precursors of the desired course of social change. On the contrary, they may be relatively more conservative to the point of resisting the course through their characteristic family organization and orientation, regional affiliation and caste ideology, property-right and other forms of vested interests.

To be sure, the fault may not lie in education *per se*, but in its content as currently administered. This, undoubtedly requires looking into, as has been suggested by thinkers and practical workers since the time of Vivekananda and Tilak, Tagore and Gandhi. But, along with it, we cannot fail to bear in mind that there is also something beyond formal education.

Similar fallacies can be pointed out in respect of other assumed levers of change. Our first task, therefore, is to collate what are the facts and what are the fallacies in respect of "social change". The next is to ascertain what should be our focus of attention and orientation of research in that context.

This, certainly, is not the responsibility of one person. But someone has to set the ball rolling, so that collective effort may eventually produce something of a far-reaching consequence. With that aim in view, this little book has been brought before the public.

"Change" to a sociologist is a matter of inference. What we deduce actually is "difference" within a "society" from the analysis of a set of observations. And we may interpret those "differences" as *change* in reference of an assumed *point of departure*. Also we may not do so, and interpret the "differences" as casual fluctuations. So the tasks we should undertake centre round the questions. (1) what is the point of departure, (2) what are the "differences" observable and observed in respect of that point, (3) how are these differences effected and what pattern emerges thereby, and (4) why does such a pattern emerge?

These questions follow in a chronological order, while to answer them unequivocally is virtually an impossible proposition. But we may approximate reality with successive precision provided we steer our activities in right lines. Therefore, a discussion on "fallacies and facts" may logically precede that on "focus and orientation". This is how the contents of this book have been arranged.

It contains six main chapters which are revised or enlarged versions of six papers I had written between 1961 and 1964. In equal numbers, they can be classified under the category of "fallacies and facts" and of "focus and orientation", as has been done in the following with the Chapter 4 and the Chapter 8

summarizing the discussions contained in the two respective parts of the book

Throughout the chapters I have scrupulously avoided the temptation to suggest how "social change" can be induced or effected. We have not arrived yet at the first base of a scientific inquiry ; viz. to unravel "what is it", "how is it", and "why is it". To suggest a solution to the problem, therefore, would not only be ill-timed but pernicious.

On the other hand, this is a unique opportunity offered to us, academic as well as applied. Most frequently we engage ourselves in post-mortem examinations ; and on that basis formulate our viewpoint, organize our thinking, and discipline our system of knowledge. But here we are involved with a live organism throwing problems at us instead of ourselves persevering to pick up "problems of research" of casual or dubious importance. What is wanted from us is something much more than intriguing conjectures, lofty speculations, or even relevant loud thinking.

All these constitute a favourite pastime in India today. But, more often than not, they only confuse the issue instead of illuminating even one of its tiny facets. A knowledge of the facts and the fallacies, an appreciation of the relevant foci of attention and orientation towards further research, on the other hand, should yield dividends eventually, although not necessarily in a spectacular manner. Consequent limitations, therefore, have been deliberately accepted.

Facts are many ; fallacies are countless. The focus of attention also need not be the only one that has been demonstrated here ; and orientation towards further research must cover further grounds than those indicated in the following pages. Therefore, although suggested by a sympathetic but critical reader of this book, I have not attempted to write a *final* chapter by "drawing together all the various suggestions for further research regarding all the social changes".

"Because, even unwittingly, that could artificially delimit the field of discussion which this book desires to initiate ; and thus its very purpose might have been defeated. For the scope and limitation of

this little volume lie in provoking a fruitful discussion (and not in coming to a conclusion as yet) on the role of sociologists in respect of the "social change" taking place in India today.

**Ramkrishna Mukherjee**

*Calcutta, May 2, 1964*





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PART I.

## FALLACIES AND FACTS



# Mainly on Fallacies

## I

A problem facing us today may be what sociologists characterize as "induced social change". This is with reference to the acceptance of the principles and methods of family planning *en masse* in India. Barring a small minority, the need for family planning at this stage of India's social development is not denied by politicians, administrators, and scientists. But the means to be used to meet the objective remain a controversial issue. At one extreme, all hopes are laid on *action programmes*; at the other, on the economic betterment and general education of the people. Protagonists of the former viewpoint would argue that time is the essence of the matter and therefore, insofar as this issue is concerned, the alternative solution would defeat its very purpose. Those sharing the latter viewpoint, on the other hand, would retort that there is no short-cut to success.

Paradoxically, either of the two viewpoints, however extreme they are, can adduce evidence to its support. In order to appreciate this quandary, one has only to examine the research reports of the governmental and semi-governmental agencies as well as the findings of social scientists working in other capacities. We are thus left with the proverbial case of seven blind men and the elephant.

The situation, deliberately exaggerated by the two extreme viewpoints, is not unique to the programme of "family planning" in India. It may be regarded as one of the recurring instances of induced social change planned for India's future development; such

as, the introduction of sanitary latrines in rural areas, establishment of village *Panchayats* on a "democratic" and casteless basis, promotion of development programmes in diverse aspects of village life, etc. But without going into specific instances we may be reasonably correct to state that in this paradoxical situation we have so far been of little service positively. Merely as chroniclers of events, we may have shown that some changes have taken place in an intervened situation ; but we have also noted parenthetically or directly that in general the social organism we are dealing with appears to be apathetic to changes.

So far, we have primarily played second fiddle to relevant political or administrative theses. Alternatively, we have stressed the need for "institutional" planning in abstract, or in our peculiar jargon unintelligible to the "men of action" in most cases, or have derived satisfaction by substantiating, contextually or otherwise, the virtues or fallacies of certain sociological schools of thought, dogmas, or doctrines. To be sure, I am persuading my colleagues and myself to look through a convex mirror that distorts our image and magnifies our shortcomings. But the process would evidently have the usefulness of exposing the essential fact that in spite of our genuine interest in examining social change *per se*, and even though we are busy with "action research", "appraisal-analysis," and "theory-oriented" studies on social change for quite a while, we have not yet been able to identify definitely the soft spots in the social organism we are dealing with, namely, those vulnerable regions of the social structure through which we may be able to break through and effect the desired course of change in society.

To illustrate, family planning studies from several parts of India have pointed out that in a large measure the people are aware of the fact that additions to the family can be checked by voluntary means. But even when in addition to that knowledge the necessary appliances are available free of charge and sustained propaganda to that effect has been conducted by the family planning centres in rural areas, the response in most cases has been insignificant or rather poor. This was borne out by the investigations undertaken by the Sociological Research Unit of the Indian Statistical Institute in ten family planning centres in five districts of West Bengal in February 1961 and in five family planning centres within a radial

distance of twenty miles from the town of Giridih in Bihar in November 1960 (Mukherjee *et al* 1961).

Similar results have also been recorded in many of the available reports on family planning activities in India ; and, significantly enough, all these studies indicate simultaneously that active resistance to the acceptance of the principles of family planning is virtually nil (Agarwala 1962). The upshot is that the Family Planning Communication and Motivation Action Research Expert Committee, organized by the Ministry of Health of the Government of India, felt it necessary to underline this point (*The Minute*, dated 16 August, 1961).

More or less the same sort of *neutral* reaction of the rural people has been reported with respect to other programmes of induced change in Indian Society, signifying thereby that to date we have not been able to learn the intrinsic mechanism of the organism under reference so as to make it amenable to a course of change.

Superficially it thus appears that we are confronted with an organism which, barring minor variations barely scratching its surface, is neither actively opposed to changes nor is enthusiastic in their support. From its overt characteristics, therefore, one may form the impression that, as probably in olden times, we encounter till today two worlds in India. One, with its heart in the Capital, is bustling with plans and programmes to change the face of India ; and the other, sprawled over the sub-continent and identified as rural India, remains apathetic to what goes on in the former sector and runs its own business in well-grooved "traditional" lines.

Indeed, this dichotomy of India appears to be no less marked in other aspects of the life and living of the people than those referred to above. For instance, child-marriage may be forbidden by law, but people continue to arrange marriages of their teenage daughters ; caste may be abolished from the ideology and action of the population census authority as a matter of government policy, but people still bow down to its dictates ; the anti-dowry bill may be enacted as law, but the dowry system remains in vogue as before ; and so on. Hence the point of view seems valid that it is *only* the general education of the people and their steady economic development which may eventually lead to the desired course of social change in India while the sociologists may be made

use of, meanwhile, as chroniclers of events (at the best) or as academic decoration (at the worst).

Yet the fact remains that, however slowly or in whatever directions (that is, for the welfare of the community or not), changes are taking place in society; and it is also evident that a process of selection is working accordingly, as seen from the acceptance of some and the rejection of the other traits in an intervened or a non-intervened situation. In the circumstances, what is our role as sociologists? Is it merely to describe the situation as it is with reference to isolated facets of the people's existence? Concurrently, is it only to record the terminal products of change, if any, from uncoordinated and/or extremely localized studies which, additionally because of fallacious planning and inconsequent coverage both in time and space perspectives, may not lead us to any generalization and/or indicate any causal inference? Alternatively, should we not so plan our studies as components of a total programme that we may properly undertake the responsibility to ascertain *how* social change in any desired direction can be accomplished or, at any rate, accelerated?

## II

With the above statement, I am obviously exposing myself to serious assault by my colleagues. For it may be argued that in the present context the situation, as it is, is not contrary to the expectation, and that the problem in view is in the back of every researcher's mind. But to ascertain the *soft spots* in an organism (in order to induce or accelerate the process of change by means additional or ancillary to the fundamental requirements of education and economic improvement of the people) is not an easy task, even if such spots can be discovered at all for the organism under reference. Hence, instead of being unduly impatient, we must accept the fact that the fulfilment of the objective is a time-consuming process, requiring sustained effort and intensive analysis of a clinical nature. It may also be pointed out that we have undertaken that responsibility along with our current investigations by



examining contingent association between *social facts* with reference to their positive or negative reaction as per the desired objective.

Even so, we have to admit that so far we have not made substantial progress in this respect, and probably because of that our use-value in society is not infrequently contested or our role in the planned development of India is given only indirect recognition. What we require therefore is to take stock of our position at the moment and plan our future course of action accordingly. Contextually, certain repeatedly-observed limitations of our present-day activities may be enumerated.

The first is that probably because of our failure to pursue the central objective consistently, we sometimes pay relatively more attention to intervened situations of lesser importance or of comparatively lower degrees of priority than those deserving high priority or greater attention

For instance, in the last few years three steel towns have been built in India, which, as a form of induced change, is assumed or expected to have a serious impact on the present and future course of existence of the local population. Intensive studies of social change, if any, in these areas (as well as similar studies of other previously established steel-town areas, etc., as control to the former) might help us to understand better the social organism under reference. But except for a few casual or purely fact-finding studies of one or two steel towns, we have not as yet taken up such a course of sustained research, while a great deal of our efforts has been spent on sporadic or piece-meal research in relation to several "action-programmes" of dubious importance or relevance.

To illustrate, in 1958 a benchmark survey was conducted by the Sociological Research Unit of the Indian Statistical Institute of the Durgapur townships in West Bengal (viz. of the settlements of the Damodar Valley Corporation, the West Bengal Government Coke Oven, and the Government of India Steel Project). The survey elicited the fact that only seven households of the townships referred to the local people living previously within ten miles of Durgapur. That is, in a very large measure, Durgapur had functioned as a safety valve to the abnormally growing population of Calcutta, its neighbourhood, and other urban areas (Pakrasi 1962a).

Furthermore, it was noticed during the survey as well as later that while the primary labouring jobs to build the townships were undertaken by people imported from Bihar or elsewhere, the local population took only a partial share of the ancillary production and services to the townships ; the bulk of it, again, being in the hands of non-natives and non-Bengalis. Journalistic agitations have been made on this point, and politicians also were quick enough to raise questions in West Bengal Legislative Assembly in this context. But to what extent the state of affairs reflects the characteristic reactions of the local people to a course of induced change, and how they are influenced by it in spite of their apparent neutrality in this respect, has scarcely been determined

To my knowledge, the only study made in this connection was by T. C. Das of the All-India Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management, Calcutta. This study referred to those who were moved out of the villages where the factories have been erected. But this study, however preliminary it may be, has not yet been published. Moreover, even such pilot inquiries are not known to have been made with respect to other steel township areas where the impact may be even more intense as affecting the "tribal" population in the main.

To touch upon some other instances of the aforesaid limitations even more summarily than the one discussed above, it may be noted, secondly, that we may concentrate our attention on an aspect of the problem which rightly deserves it. But, concurrently, we may so overstress a fact in order to substantiate our pet hypothesis (instead of examining its relative bearing in society as per our specific objective) that the gain obtained by our precise identification or selection of the important issue is lost at least partially, or even entirely. For example, in deciding what should be the focus of an intervened situation in rural society, we have to ascertain what should be the operational and/or the investigative unit : a village, an intra-village grouping, or an inter-village "region" suitably defined. But in this respect we often stress *unilaterally* (1) the integrating character of village society (Dube 1955 : 7ff, 1958b; Opler 1956 : 5-10; &c.), or (2) the presence of intra-village factional groups (Singh 1961), or (3) the existence of inter-village levels of integration within a "region" (Dumont and Pocock 1957).

Whereas, we seldom undertake the task of ascertaining critically their relative importance with respect to those features in the life and living of the people as are under reference, even though such critical assessment would be the first step towards locating the *soft spots* in the organism vis-a-vis specific courses of induced change in society (Mukherjee 1961a : 3-29) ; for instance, the investigation of the functioning of the Government-sponsored village *panchayats* as opposed to the traditional ones based on caste or other customary groupings which may cut across village boundaries or may on the other hand, represent intra-village groupings (Majumdar 1958 : 93-148 ; unpublished data of a survey in villages around Giridih in Bihar, conducted by the Sociological Research Unit of the Indian Statistical Institute in 1960-61; &c).

Thirdly, certain contingent associations may be evident from our studies (whatever may be their relative importance or deserved degree of priority), but frequently they lead to the obvious conclusion that it is the so-called "educated" and economically the "upper" class in the society under examination which appears to be relatively the most vulnerable to a course of induced change.

For instance, diagnostic studies have shown that better techniques to increase agricultural production are adopted, if at all, by the propertied and comparatively better-educated agriculturists rather than by the impoverished and the least-educated peasantry (Bose 1961 : 138-145; Freeman 1961 : 126-134; &c). Similar studies have pointed out, likewise, that even though the "proletarianized" urban population would have been expected to be relatively more sympathetic to family planning than the educated "upper middle" class (as the former have little or virtually no material basis to preserve the traditional values for the maintenance of large and joint families and as small elementary family-units are likely to be more conducive to their existence), it is the latter which appears to be relatively more prone to accept the family planning methods (Poti *et al* 1960 : 63-89).

In short, it appears that it is the *elite* of a society which represents the prime movers and/or receivers in the process of *technological* change (Dube 1958a : 56 ff.). But this deduction (whatever may be its specific usefulness) is often supposed to lead to the conclusion that education and economic welfare of the masses are the only

means to achieve the desired course of *social change* in our society. Contextually, whether or not the course of technological change thus becomes all-embracing and, even then, whether it can be accelerated by some additional or ancillary means, remains an open question. For we seldom pursue the matter through successively intensive investigations.

Fourthly, even when some contingent associations are established as leading to significant causal inferences relevant to our objective, they are sometimes found contradictory to pre-conceived ideas, and, in that case, instead of investigating further the nature and the consequences of such contingent associations, we may go on harping on the *a priori* hypotheses and elucidating the problems on that basis

For example, it used to be believed that a "high development of parental impulses . . . has been institutionalised in the authority of the joint family" (Mukherjee, Radhakamal 1938: SA 5); and this belief has been stressed repeatedly in relation to what has been labelled as the "cultural barriers to family planning in under-developed countries", without inquiring into its validity. In fact, it was underlined in 1946 in an authoritative publication on India's population and planned parenthood. It was stressed forcefully before an international gathering of family planning experts in 1955 with the categorical assertion that the "traditional families such as the joint family in India, and the extended family in China" encourage high fertility because in addition to the persistence of such ideas as having "large families" the problem of child-care, etc., can be met with at marginal cost and trouble in relatively large-sized family-units. It was again recorded *ad verbatim* in 1961 (Chandrasekhar 1946: 21 ff, 1955: 67-68; 1961: 110-111). Meanwhile, investigations carried out in this context have pointed to the fact that it is the elementary family-units (of parents and children only) which register higher fertility rates than "joint" family-units, irrespective of rural/urban, community/language, and inter-state differences (ISI 1960: 176; Dutta 1961: 78-81; Mukherjee and Bandyopadhyay—unpublished; etc.).

No doubt the contingent association noted above has not led us yet to any causal inference with a bearing on general application. But the fact remains that: (1) we do not consistently

endeavour to test the validity of our *a priori* hypotheses even though they may have very important bearings on the problems in view ; (2) we may go on voicing our opinions on the basis of apparently false hypotheses, and remain oblivious to what has been found on the contrary , and (3) very infrequently we pin-point our subsequent course of investigation to find out the roots of such seemingly contradictory associations and thereby attempt to elicit the true sources of causation.

Following from the above, to cite another instance of our frequently observed limitations, (the fifth in the above chronological order), even when some contingent associations are decidedly found to be of general application with respect to a course of induced change, we may refuse to learn the lesson from it and plan our subsequent scheme of research accordingly. For example, with respect to the promotion of family planning in India, it is evident from various studies that the women, even if some of them appear to be positively interested in the measures, have little or no say in the matter ; the decision rests essentially with the menfolk. But although such a contingent association has been reported from virtually all corners of India, and although a similar situation has been noted for the U.S.A. of all countries (Lee 1960), we still go on undertaking research projects relating to the role of women in the communication and motivational aspects of family planning instead of giving priority to the investigation of the role of men in the affair, or even restricting our attention to the latter for the time being in view of our available facilities for such research undertakings.

Sixth, in spite of the fact that differential reaction of the people may be consistently noted from a series of relevant contingent associations with respect to certain drives for induced change, we do not always go into the question of *why* such have been their reactions. For instance, while sponsoring development programmes in rural areas, it has been repeatedly found from various regions that the people may take to some particular measures of increasing their agricultural production and reject some specific ones ; the introduction of certain crops in the area may be welcomed, but the attempt to encourage certain forms of manuring may be by-passed.

These kinds of almost categorical reactions of the people are often evaluated on their face-value as peculiar "resistance" of the

un-enlightened mass ✓ As a result, with persistent administrators and scientists the policy often becomes merely to conduct patient propaganda in order to instil eventually the usefulness of such developmental measures in the minds of the villagers. Attention is rarely given to the question *why* in this context ✓ and this is so in spite of the fact that our sustained researches with reference to this question "why" are expected to give us an inkling of the intrinsic mechanism of the organism under reference.

### III

Like the above ones, other situations may, no doubt, be enumerated. But without elaborating on these details, it should be obvious that if instead of frittering away our energy we are to consolidate our special branch of knowledge to solve the basic problem in Indian society (as I have posed in the foregoing pages with pardonable exaggerations in order to highlight its importance and urgency), the first task would naturally be to come to an agreement on how to go about the undertaking.

Broad statements have been frequently made on the need for a *holistic* approach to the appreciation of societal phenomena. We have also noted occasionally that any change in society—induced or automatic—should be examined as a *process* and not as an *entity*. No doubt, such formulations, useful as they are, are in the back of every researcher's mind ; but, in the course of operation of research schemes, they often get lost. What may, therefore, be useful to decide and standardize beforehand is how we should plan our research activities in relation to social change in India and how actually we should proceed to make our findings fruitful.

I should not fail to note here that there are some sociologists who are consistently pursuing the desired course of painstaking research. I should also note that diagnostic studies have been advocated by these as well as by other sociologists as the proper method to ascertain the *soft spots* in the organism under reference in a line similar to that employed for the study of epidemiological problems. Certainly there are other methods in the offing, which also deserve

taking note of while working out our plan of action. Perhaps it is high-time that we, the sociologists in India, pool our experience and work out a concerted line of attack on the problem we face and which we should persevere to solve.

What I have said above may appear to be too simple, to the point of being banal. But what is simple is not always accomplished. In any case, a solution to this simple problem appears to me as fundamental to us being useful to society in the perspective of the changes taking place in present-day India and the way such changes are desired to be accelerated or retarded. Therefore, as the first step, I propose to discuss in the next two chapters two major fallacies commonly found in India today. Namely, urban and/or industrial development bring in "new values" in society commensurate with the *social transformation* we desire in our country.





# Two Concepts and Their Implications

## ON URBANIZATION AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

### I

Over the last few decades the census definition of cities and towns in India have not remained uniform. This affects a correct measure of the *rate* of urban development. But that cities and towns are growing or emerging anew is a fact not to be disputed. Also that increasingly improved means of transport and communication are bringing the villages nearer the urban centres is an accepted phenomenon. Briefly therefore, at whatever pace it may be, urban development and urbanization are gathering momentum in India. But what is their effect on the *social* transformation of the people involved?

This is a *moot* question. Because, in whichever way the process and the degree of urbanization may be interpreted, the underlying assumption is that: "The differences between rural and urban populations represent contrasts between the old and the new, and in a sense they provide us with insights into the character of man's social and cultural life prior to urbanization" (Gibbs 1961 : 463). How far, and in what manner, then the rural-urban differences and interrelations can be so explained in India?

The question implies an examination of two aspects of the problem which may appear to have no connection between them but

are, in fact, closely associated : (1) as consequent to the process and degree of urbanization, whether changes in the social organization and/or in the ideological orientation of the people are evident, incipient, or absent , (2) in the first two of the three enumerated situations, whether the course of changes conforms to the concept of *rural-urban dichotomy* or of *rural-urban continuum*.

The mention of the two concepts in reference to the probable process of urbanization is not of idle academic interest. If a particular course of urbanization is to be nurtured or destroyed, how it is taking place in society has to be ascertained beforehand. Namely, as between two conceptually exclusive entities of "urban" and "rural"? Or, in terms of a spectrum which registers the influence of the urban sector on the rest of the country in a gradient of physical distance, transportation time and cost, etc., as "city-large towns-small towns-neighbouring villages-remote villages"?

The first process would subscribe to the concept of rural-urban dichotomy, the second to that of rural-urban continuum. And the respective processes would have an important bearing on the strategy and tactics of implementing any planned programme for India's social development.

In the following, therefore, I shall examine the lasting imprints of urbanization on the way of life of the people in terms of its mode of operation. My movements would be restricted to the State of West Bengal and the Giridih sub-division of the district of Hazaribagh in the adjoining State of Bihar. In these two regions my colleagues and I are working for a number of years, and some of the data we have collected as by-products in the course of our researches may be pertinent to the problem under reference.<sup>1</sup>

## II

I shall first examine the pattern of migration to urban areas so as to ascertain whether it would facilitate the operation of the concept of rural-urban dichotomy or rural-urban continuum or none. Thereafter, we may go in for an examination of the exact process at work with respect to rural-urban differences and relationships.

We notice, accordingly, that if the immediate neighbourhood of a town is under reference, rural-urban dichotomy seems to be indicated by the pattern of migration. In Durgapur, which in West Bengal has its impressive growth from a scratch in the last ten years, we found in 1958 that, excluding those who were there temporarily in order to build the townships, out of its 1174 resident family-units and non-familial units (that is, individuals living and eating by themselves without any kin or affine) only 7 had moved into the townships from the surrounding rural area of 10-mile walking distance. The newly established town thus appears to have built an invisible wall around it which the neighbouring villagers prefer not, or hesitate, to cross.

It may be argued that this town was planted in an area to function as an industrial centre, and so its specialized character would naturally forbid immigration from the neighbourhood. Such an argument would not be frivolous, but it need not explain the situation comprehensively. Moreover, the point noted for a specialized town like Durgapur and in a particular culture area like West Bengal is also found to be true for another town (Giridih) which had the common run of development in a different culture area.

From a small place in Hazaribagh district of the State of Bihar, Giridih gradually grew into a township in the last hundred years with the discovery of coal mines in the region, the opening of a branch line of the Eastern Railway in 1853 to connect it with Calcutta-Delhi rail-route, and the establishment of mica processing industries in the town and the neighbourhood since the beginning of the present century. It was also, and still is, reputed as a health resort. And for this town in Bihar also we note the same pattern of migration as observed for the newly established and specialized town of Durgapur in West Bengal.

Such as, a survey of the total of 6652 family-units and non-familial units in the town in 1958 brought out the fact that only 13 of them were autochthones of the area, and only 662 (or 10 per cent) had immigrated from the surrounding villages of 10-mile walking distance. 67 per cent of them, on the other hand, were from the remaining parts of Bihar and particularly from rural areas.

It appears therefore, that whether or not a town has undergone a gradual course of development or is imposed on an area for a

special purpose, the local rustics do not usually cross the fence and become urbanites.

All the same, they feel increasingly interested to make the best use of the amenities available in an urban neighbourhood or in the town itself. Evidence of that would strike any one in the eye who comes to Durgapur these days. Also, obviously because of the same reason, we found from a survey of all the 261 villages falling within a walking distance of 10 miles from Giridih township that the villages nearer the town have relatively more households than those at a distance (item 1, Table 1); and<sup>2</sup> that the settlers in villages nearer the township are comparatively recent immigrants unlike those in distant villages (item 2, Table 1).

Table 1

Attribute	Villages at walking distance from Giridih town (in miles)		
	0-5	6-10	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1. Percentage to the total number of villages (in brackets) under each category of distance from Giridih, of those containing total number of households as	1-25	20	39
	26-100	47	50
	101 & more	33	11
	Total	100 (86)	100 (175)
2. Percentage to the total number of households (in brackets) living in sampled villages* under each distance-category, of those with years of settlement as	0-50	43	21
	51-100	34	31
	101 & more	23	48
	Total	100 (1348)	100 (1178)
			100 (2526)

\* The villages refer to a random sample of 6 from those falling within a walking distance of 0-5 miles from Giridih town, and of 12 from those falling within a walking distance of 6-10 miles

The above findings thus tend to indicate that the rural folk surrounding a township are prone to maintain rural-urban dichotomy in their settlement while inflating the suburbs by moving into the periphery of the town in order to utilize the amenities of life and living therein.

From beyond the immediate neighbourhood, however, the rural people do move into urban areas; and it is rural-urban migration which essentially characterizes the pattern of settlement in cities and

towns alike. This becomes evident from an examination of the patri-virilocal ancestral residence of the "heads" of co-resident and commensal kingroups in Calcutta and Howrah, virtually the only cities in West Bengal, and in four towns drawn at random from all the towns in the State<sup>2</sup> (col. 5, Table 2).

Table 2

City or Town	Percentage to total family-units and non-familial units in each city town, of those with their patri-virilocal ancestral home located in			Percentage of rural to total migrant units from India or East Pakistan	Percentage to total rural-urban migrant units from anywhere in India to each city town, of those still maintaining their patri-virilocal ancestral residence in villages		
	Same city, or town	Outside India or East Pakistan	Elsewhere in India or East Pakistan		Family-units	Non-familial units	Ethnic units
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
City	Calcutta	5	1	94	91	26	65
	Howrah	8	-	92	96	37	74
	(Sub-total)	6	1	93	92	28	67
Town	Adra	-	2	98	82	61	92
	Berhampore	31	-	69	97	17	56
	Contai	17	-	83	95	30	84
	Siliguri	1	0	99	98	10	75
	(Sub-total)	19	0	81	95	29	75
Total		6	1	92	92	29	68

[Note. For this and for the following tables "0" stands for less than 1 per cent, "-" for none.]

To be sure, in the common run of towns (that is, those which have gradually emerged in the area like Berhampore and Contai) the autochthones are seen to claim a visible share of their total inhabitants. Whereas in cities or in those towns which have been built in an area with a special purpose (such as a "railway town" like Adra and, partly, Siliguri) the situation is different (cols. 2-4, Table 2). But as rural-urban migration remains the key note of growth for all these urban areas, we may examine next how it commensurates with the concept of rural-urban dichotomy or rural-urban continuum.

For the migrant units from rural areas may reflect rural-urban dichotomy in the sense that they have cut off their connections with the places of emigration. They may, on the other hand, facilitate the operation of the concept of rural-urban continuum by maintaining contact with their previous settlements. In West Bengal, of course, the situation is complicated by the fact that almost all the displaced persons from East Pakistan, who compose an appreciable share of the State's population today, have been obliged to sever that connection for reasons which do not concern us here. Therefore, leaving aside these "East Pakistan migrant units", it is seen that more than half of the remaining rural-urban migrants could be cited to facilitate the process of rural-urban continuum (col. 8, Table 2).

It is also noticed that this process is particularly manifest with respect to the non-familial units, that is, individuals living by themselves in cities and towns and not with any kin or affine (cols 6 and 7, Table 2). These persons could have been absorbed in urban life with less possibilities towards backsliding to rural if they had severed their connections with paternal ancestral homes. Contrariwise, if they maintain such a vital contact (as the figures point out), it could be supposed that they would help in bridging the assumed gulf of difference between urban and rural life. For along with analogous family-units, they could then become carriers of urban "values" to villages.

Pursuantly, we should examine against the background of the cultural *milieu* the mode of contact of those rural immigrants to towns and cities who still maintain their patri-virilocal ancestral homes in villages. For the concept of rural-urban continuum would attain its social meaning, or in any case the course of relation envisaged by this concept would be more effective, if the process of contact refers to the same culture area or similar culture areas.

The following questions may, therefore, be posed in this context :

(a) Is the presently discussed form of rural-urban relationship comparatively the dominant note with respect to the local area where the town or the city is situated (as for example, the district) ?

(b) Does it gradually loses its intensity as one proceeds from the local area to the same cultural region (as for example, the State of

West Bengal for the cities and towns under reference), and thereafter to other cultural regions (as for example, other States in India) ?

Or, (c) Is this form of rural-urban contact diffused over a wide region of heterogeneous culture-constituents, making a break with the culture-area in which the city/town is located ; so that this form of rural-urban relationship does not maintain a cultural and geographical continuity and therefore in that respect does not represent a continuous process ?

Table 3

City/Town	Percentage to total rural-urban migrant units from region anywhere in India to each city, town, of those with the patri-virilocal ancestral home located in			Percentage of rural-urban migrant units still maintaining their patri-virilocal ancestral residence in villages to the total number of units immigrated to each city/town from			
	Same local area (district)	Same cultural region (West Bengal)	Other cultural region	Same local area	Same cultural region	Other cultural region	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
City	Calcutta	3	40	60	21	45	66
	Howrah	2	37	63	23	59	57
	(sub-total)	3	39	61	21	47	65
Town	Adra	2	34	66	100	71	89
	Berham-pore	62	86	14	42	37	77
	Contai	79	98	2	60	55	100
	Siliguri	37	62	38	32	42	66
	(sub-total)	48	73	27	44	43	79
Total		3	40	60	25	47	65

Apropos, we first notice that rural-urban migration from the local area is the distinctive feature of those towns which have gradually emerged as such in their areas (Berhampore and Contai). That from the same cultural region but not from the local area is the distinctive feature of the partly specialized town (Siliguri). And that from other cultural regions is the distinctive feature of the fully specialized town (Adra) and the cities (cols. 2-4, Table 3).

The pattern of rural-urban migration thus appears to facilitate the operation of the concept of rural-urban continuum for the common run of towns but not for the specialized ones or for the cities.

But we notice concurrently that the rural immigrants to all these urban settlements maintain their patri-virilocal ancestral residence in villages the most frequently if they have moved in from other cultural regions, and that this characteristic of the migrants is no less visible for the common run of towns than for the specialized ones and the cities (cols. 5-7, Table 3). That is, by cultural hiatus between regions of emigration and immigration or by the severance of rural-urban contact with the local and/or the same culture-area, the pattern of rural-urban migration in West Bengal tends, on the whole, to facilitate rural-urban dichotomy more than rural-urban continuum.

Yet a course of change seems to be indicated in the evolution of urban areas with reference to one or the other process of rural-urban relation they facilitate in different phases of their development.

Thus one of the sampled towns (Contai), which could be labelled as an "urban village" at its infant status as a town, is seen to give a fair indication of the presently discussed aspect of rural-urban continuum. Namely: (a) it has a strong core of autochthonous inhabitants, (b) most of its immigrants are from villages within the district locating the township and only a few from culture areas beyond West Bengal, and (c) about half of the rural immigrants from the local area or the same cultural region still maintain their patri-virilocal ancestral residence in villages.

Another sampled town (Berhampore), which has gradually emerged in its area like the above one but which has a history of development going back more than a hundred years, is seen to represent similar characteristics but with less intensity. The process, on the other hand, is found lost to the specialized town (Adra) and the two cities, with the partly-specialized town (Siliguri) playing an intermediate role in this respect.

Furthermore, we notice that falling in line with the above pattern, the industrial town of Durgapur behaves like the sampled specialized town (Adra) and the cities, with 75 per cent of its



immigrant units from rural areas coming from such places in India as are beyond West Bengal. The course of migration to Giridih in Bihar, on the other hand, is seen to be like that to the older of the two sampled common run of towns in West Bengal (Berhampore).

The character of a township as well as its period of existence is thus of significant import.

Does this mean that at the incipient stage of urban development by rural-urban migration rural-urban continuum is the process that operates with the autochthones claiming an appreciable share of the town's population and the remainder being made up, predominantly, of those who from the local area and/or the same cultural region decide to move into the urban settlement but do not sever, as yet, their contact with previous habitation ?

Does this also mean that after attaining adolescence the towns begin to represent, more and more, rural-urban dichotomy with people from outlying areas settling therein, and the urbanites (especially the locally migrated urbanites) cutting off their connections with village homes ?

Lastly, does the above package of stray evidence further imply that for towns imposed on an area for special purposes as well as for cities rural-urban dichotomy remains always the key motif of the pattern of migration, that is, without an initial phase depicting rural-urban continuum ?

I do not know how far the above indications obtained from a scanty coverage of urban settlements in West Bengal and Bihar would be valid even for these two States, not to speak for other States of India or elsewhere. Nevertheless, they may be regarded to provide us with a set of hypotheses to test for a fuller appreciation of rural-urban differences and relationships in terms of urban development from rural-urban continuum or rural-urban dichotomy.

Particularly, such hypotheses may be useful with reference to two very practical points to be encountered by a planner. Namely : (a) the advisability "of promoting small and medium-sized towns as 'counter-magnates' to large cities, and as 'nurseries' of urbanisation" ; and (b) the validity of regarding the small town "as the 'bridge' between the urban and the rural universe" (Glass 1962 : 2-3).

### III

Irrespective of the course of evolution of an urban area from rural-urban migration, the relatively greater emphasis laid, eventually, by the process on rural-urban dichotomy rather than on rural-urban continuum would acquire a meaning only if a qualitative difference is observed between the rural and the urban *way of life*. For if the relevant characteristics of rural and urban life were the same or they differed only in degrees and not in quality, the potentiality created by the rural-urban migrants for the operation of the concept of rural-urban dichotomy could hardly be utilized. We may, therefore, examine next whether any such categorical distinction can be drawn between urban and rural, or more strictly among city-town-village, in the social characteristics of the people.

That differences are there between urban and rural areas in their physical characteristics and density of population, utilization of land and habitation, economic organisation and material amenities available to the people is a fact requiring no elaboration. Exceptions may be there, and there are certainly variations in degrees in the urban and the rural sector in these and allied respects. But, while relevant to finer precisions to be obtained in the definition of what is urban and what is rural, such exceptions and variations need not concern us directly.

What, on the other hand, we should be concerned with is the *social* connotation of rural-urban differences. But this is often identified with the material culture of the people; at the most, with also other facets of their "cultural" attainments whereby a man of the metropolis can be distinguished *overtly* from a small town man or the latter from a villager. An association is thus established between the distinctive economic organisations of urban and rural areas and the respective "cultural" characteristics of their inhabitants, which may not be generally untrue.

All the same, with such an association also we are not concerned directly and primarily. ✓ For the *way of life* of a people, or of their constituent groups, is expressed fundamentally through

their "social" characteristics, *viz.* their social organization and ideological orientation. ✓ And so far we have no conclusive evidence on the point that there is a causal or concomitant relation between differences in the "cultural" characteristics of the constituents of a society and their "social" characteristics as defined above, or in terms of demographic and economic difference between rural and urban areas. ✓

Hence the question to be asked in the present context should be formulated as follows: Are there distinct rural-urban differences in the social organization and/or the ideological orientation of the people because of, or irrespective of, their differential affiliation to the economic organization of society and/or their differences in "cultural" characteristics, etc. ?

Pursuant to the above question, I shall now examine a few attributes relating to two major social institutions in West Bengal society; or for that matter in Indian society at large.

✓ One of the institutions is the family, the other is caste. For patri-virilocally joint family organization is accepted for West Bengal as well as virtually for the whole of India as the traditional norm, and it is further presumed to be contrary to the urban way of life, but not to the rural. Similarly, the caste system of India is regarded to impart a specific character to Hindu social organization; or, for that matter, to the Indian social organization including other religious communities insofar as West Bengal is concerned, at any rate (Mukherjee 1957). And with respect to this institution also it is presumed that caste organization and caste ideology are antithetical to the urban way of life but not necessarily to rural. ✓

Therefore, an examination of rural-urban differences vis-a-vis these two major aspects of social organization of West Bengal and the consequent ideological make-up of the people should give us a fair answer to the question I have raised above.

To begin with the familial organization of West Bengal society, we find while examining the co-resident and commensal kingroups as locally functioning family-units that the prevalence of the extended (non-nuclear) family type is of equal order for cities, towns and villages. Whereas, paradoxically, (a) the nuclear family type is the most frequent in villages, next in towns, and

the least frequent in cities ; and (b) the existence of individuals who eat and live without any kin or affine (*viz.* non-familial units as a corollary to family-units under the same term of reference) shows a counter trend (Table 4).

Table 4

Family organization as co-resident and commensal kingroups	Percentage to respective totals for West Bengal				
	City	Town	Village	Urban	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1. Non - familial unit	33	18	9	32	13
2 Nuclear unit	35	47	58	36	54
3 Extended unit	32	35	33	32	33
T o t a l	100	100	100	100	100
4. Nuclear to (Nuclear + Extended)	52	57	63	52	62

✓ This is obviously in contradiction to prevailing assumptions on rural-urban, or city-town-village, differences in the familial organization of Indian society.<sup>3</sup> Yet it could be argued that this kind of structural variation in familial organization does not rule out *ipso facto* the existence of rural-urban difference in the family life of the people as reflecting the rural versus urban way of life.

✓ For the observed city-town-village variations in family structures as locally functioning societal units may be conditioned by the economics of the co-resident and commensal kingroups.<sup>4</sup> And possibly because of this indispensable control of finance on family organization we find a picture of rural-urban difference contrary to the expectation or common assumption (*vide*. Table 5 and 6).

✓ It would also be worthy of note that the positive association found between the extended family organization and the relative economic prosperity of the social strata in which this family type is the most frequently represented tends to suggest that given the financial basis the people *en masse* might be inclined to constitute extended family-units (Table 5). Even so, we may be asked to investigate whether, additionally or more pointedly, there is any intrinsic difference in the emergence of the respective family types in the city-town-village sectors on ideological considerations.

Table 5

Classifying categories for the co-resident and commensal kingroups of West Bengal		Percentage to totals for respective classifying categories under col (1)				
		Non- familial	Nuclear	Extended	Total	Nuclear to Extended
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1 Affiliation to sectors of national economy	1. Agriculture	6	60	24	100	64
	2 Handicraft pro- duction	15	50	35	100	59
	3 Machine industries	34	32	34	100	49
	4 Trade and com- merce	19	42	39	100	52
	5. Profession and services	38	36	26	100	58
	6 Any other	18	54	28	100	66
	7. None	70	14	16	100	47
2 Type of job performed	1 Non-manual high grade	10	48	42	100	54
	2 Non-manual middle grade	13	44	43	100	50
	3 Non-manual low grade	33	36	31	100	53
	4. Manual . skilled	6	51	43	100	55
	5 Manual semi- skilled	19	59	22	100	73
	6 Manual unskilled	12	62	26	100	71
3 Activity status	1 Employer	9	46	45	100	50
	2. Employee	18	56	26	100	69
	3 Own-account worker	5	55	40	100	58
4 Education	1 None	17	59	24	100	71
	2. Below matri- culation	9	49	42	100	54
	3. Matriculation and above	7	41	52	100	44
5 Religion and caste	1. Hindu-high castes	18	46	36	100	56
	2. Hindu-middle castes	13	48	39	100	55
	3 Hindu-low castes	15	51	34	100	61
	4 Muslim-high rank	6	78	16	100	83
	5 Muslim - others	9	61	30	100	67
	6 Other religious groups	8	64	28	100	70
6. All social strata combined		13	54	33	100	62

Notes (1) Items 1-3 refer to the "heads" of the units

(2) Item 4 refers to the maximum educational level attained by *any one* in the unit

(3) Item 5 refers to all unit-members. The "Hindu high castes" refer to Brahmin, Vaidya and Kayastha; "Hindu middle castes" to those from whom an orthodox Brahmin will take water (*jal chal*), and "Hindu low castes" to those from whom an orthodox Brahmin will not take water (*jal achai*). The Muslims of "high rank" refer to the "non-functional" groups containing those who will not inter-dine or inter-marry with the constituents of Muslims "functional" groups categorized as "others."

Table 6

Classifying categories for the co-resident and commensal kingroups of West Bengal			Percentage to respective totals for West Bengal				
			City	Town	Village	Urban	Total
(1)			(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1	Affiliation to sectors of national economy	1 Agriculture	0	0	85	0	70
		2. Handicraft production	6	0	2	5	3
		3 Machine industries	19	0	1	18	4
		4 Trade and commerce	31	33	4	31	9
		5 Profession and services	29	42	5	30	9
		6 Any other	14	25	2	15	4
		7 None	1	0	1	1	1
Total			100	100	100	100	100
2	Type of job performed	1 Non-manual high grade	10	15	12	10	12
		2 Non-manual middle grade	23	39	5	23	8
		3 Non-manual low grade	9	0	1	9	2
		4 Manual skilled	21	23	32	21	30
		5 Manual semi-skilled	25	23	26	25	26
		6 Manual unskilled	12	0	24	12	22
Total			100	100	100	100	100
3.	Activity status	1 Employer	5	13	11	5	10
		2 Employee	73	60	43	72	48
		3 Own-account worker	22	27	46	23	42
Total			100	100	100	100	100
4	Education	1 None	25	18	63	25	56
		2. Below matriculation	44	38	30	44	32
		3. Matriculation and above	31	44	7	31	12
Total			100	100	100	100	100
5.	Religion and caste	1. Hindu-high castes	36	62	8	37	12
		2 Hindu-middle castes	24	23	31	24	30
		3. Hindu-low castes	29	15	35	28	34
		4 Muslim-high rank	2	0	10	2	9
		5 Muslim-others	7	0	10	7	10
		6. Other religious groups	2	0	6	2	5
Total			100	100	100	100	100

[ Note Explanations as for Table 5 ]

Namely, the prevalence of the nuclear family type in the villages may be dictated primarily by the dire economic resources of the bulk of the rural folk who could not therefore maintain the extended family organization even if they wished to. Also in urban areas economic circumstances may decide the nuclear family organization in a number of cases; while the bulk of the affluent persons may be steeped in traditional attachment to the extended family organization. — But, in spite of such being the major phenomenon in the society as a whole, do we notice concurrently in the urban area (and particularly in cities) that there is a tendency to form nuclear units as a manifestation of the urban way of life? —

In the latter case, the decision to form nuclear units would not rest on the financial question but on the "value judgement" of the urbanites (of an appreciable share of the urbanites, at any rate) with reference to the emphasis laid on the conjugal and the parental relations in family organisation in contradistinction to the emphasis laid on other varieties of kinship relation in an extended family-unit. Pursuantly, we should expect that deviating from the practice of forming locally functioning nuclear units the orientation of the relevant persons towards the extended family organisation would be found relatively more frequently in villages than in towns and cities —

Concurrently, as against those in villages, we should expect that the non-familial units in urban areas would have either lost their family moorings in a drastic conformity with the assumed urban way of life or, more probably, their mental make-up would be distinctly in favour of the nuclear rather than of the extended family organisation. And, lastly, out of those living under the extended family organisation, the tendency should be discerned in cities and towns to form nuclear family-units, while such a tendency should be lacking in rural areas. —

Apropos, we asked the "heads" of the surveyed co-resident and commensal kingroups as well as every person that lived singly to enumerate who were his/her "family members"; and, thereafter, we ascertained who among the enumerated persons belonged to the "head's" co-resident and commensal unit, who did not, and who belonged to it though not reported as "family members". In this

way, without giving the informants any clue to bias the desired information, we assessed the familial integration of the people and the type of family organization to which they belonged, as locally functioning social units.

We found, accordingly, that in the mental dimension of the "heads" of family-units and non-familial units (a) the extended (non-nuclear) family type is the dominant note in the cities but not in towns or villages; (b) the nuclear family type is the dominant note for villages and then for towns, but not for cities, and (c) the proportion of persons leading an a-familial life is virtually of the same order between city-town-village, and as found previously for the rural sector in terms of forming locally functioning units (Table 7)

Table 7

Familial integration of the "heads" of co-resident and commensal kingroups	Percentage to respective totals for West Bengal				
	City	Town	Village	Urban	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1. Non-familial unit	6	10	8	6	7
2. Nuclear family	40	51	58	41	55
3. Extended family	54	39	34	53	38
Total	100	100	100	100	100

We also noticed that so far as the rural sector of West Bengal is concerned there has been virtually no change in the proportionate representation of family types according to the practice of forming locally functioning units and the orientation of those forming such units. Whereas, in the urban sector the divergence is marked in favour of the extended family type in the mental construct of the people; leading it to become the dominant note for the cities especially. And, significantly, the orientation towards the nuclear family type of those maintaining the extended family organization is practically absent in cities, towns, and villages alike (*vide*, Table 8).

The inference is thus forced on us that the nuclear family organization as one of the manifestations of the urban way of life is nowhere in the picture<sup>5</sup> (*vide*, Table 9).



Table 8

Familial organization as co-resident and commensal kingroup and familial integration of the "heads" to different types		Percentage to respective totals for West Bengal				
		City	Town	Village	Urban	Total
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1. Non-familial & Non-familial		6	10	8	6	7
2. „ & Nuclear		10	5	1	10	1
3. „ & Extended		17	3	0	16	5
4. Nuclear & Non-familial		0	0	0	0	0
5. „ & Nuclear		30	46	57	31	54
6. „ & Extended		5	1	1	5	0
7. Extended & Non-familial		0	0	0	0	0
8. „ & Nuclear		0	0	0	0	0
9. „ & Extended		32	35	33	32	33
Total		100	100	100	100	100

Table 9

Attribute		Percentage to total extended families in respective sectors of West Bengal				
		City	Town	Village	Urban	Total
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1. Structure of extended families as locally functioning units	1. Only patri-virilocally joint	61	60	74	61	72
	2. Patri-virilocally joint with "extra" kins or affines	20	20	10	20	12
	3. Nuclear with "extra" kins or affines	17	20	13	17	14
	4. Others	2	—	3	2	2
	Total	100	100	100	100	100
2. Structure of extended families in the mental dimension of those forming units as per 1	1. Only patri-virilocally joint	72	69	75	72	74
	2. Patri-virilocally joint with "extra" kins or affines	14	12	10	14	11
	3. Nuclear with "extra" kins or affines	12	16	12	12	12
	4. Others	2	3	3	2	3
	Total	100	100	100	100	100

The inference, however, may not be considered to clinch the issue under reference. Because, it would be argued, any change in the value system of a people takes a longer time to be crystallized into their organizational structure than detected in their attitudes and beliefs, and this would, evidently, be particularly true with respect to the primary social institution of the family. Hence, the argument would follow, the impact of urban life on the familial organization or integration of the people would be revealed in course of time although not visible as yet !

Apropos, we may examine next the caste organization and the caste ideology of the people concerned. Because it has often been asserted—sometimes on factual evidence and no less frequently as conjectures—that since a long time the rules of the caste system are less rigidly followed in the urban areas than in villages.

Apparently, this is true with respect to commensality between castes. But, again, the basic question arises. Does this form of deviation from prescribed caste rules only substantiate the resilience of the institution as expressed under adverse conditions? Proof of such adaptations of caste behaviour within the purview of the institution abounds in India's history (cf. Mukherjee 1957, 1958 ; Risley 1891, viii ; etc) The appropriate question to ask in the present context would therefore be as follows : Has this form of deviation from prescribed caste rules been only an unavoidable adjustment to the urban living forced upon the urbanites ? Or, is it an indication towards the withering away of the caste system in urban areas in contradistinction to the situation in the rural ?

For commensality between castes may have to be accepted as a matter of exigency when people of various castes are comrades at work and are working at one place. So that they have to congregate during lunch breaks and perhaps later also in the same recreation centres as befitting their economic and cultural background. Hence inter-dining between castes may be more pronounced in urban than in rural areas, and especially in cities. Because in the cities and towns the economic organisation would subscribe more to such an arrangement.

Contextually, therefore, instead of noting merely that inter-dining between castes is more prevalent in cities and towns than in villages (even if that be true), the question to be raised is : Has this form

of change regarding commensality between castes led to closer inter-caste relations in the urban than in the rural areas ? For instance has there been a sharp rise in inter-caste marriage in the cities and towns as distinct from the situation in the villages ?

Relevant data brought out only 1 family-unit out of 1040 interviewed in the cities, none out of 631 interviewed in the towns, and again only 1 out of 2249 interviewed in the villages, in which inter-caste marriage had taken place. That is, even if there has been *relatively* a greater incidence of inter-caste marriage in the urban areas (especially in the cities) than in the rural, as is often announced from official and non-official quarters, the figures indicate that their magnitude in the society at large is virtually of no consequence.

Evidently, the caste organization remains qualitatively the same in cities, towns, and villages ; with variations in degrees to suit the exigency of the nature of settlement but not to do away with the caste structure of society either in the urban or in the rural area.

The point made may, however, be countered with the argument cited earlier that changes in society may not have yet been established in the organizational system but its impulses can be felt in the ideological orientation of the people. Apropos, we should ask ourselves the question : Given the assumed difference in degrees in the observance of caste rules between urban and rural dwellers, or among the inhabitants of city-town-village, does this difference prompt more urban than rural dwellers to free themselves from the caste ideology ? Namely : do the urbanites denounce the caste system, *at least in words*, more than the rustics ?

In order to ascertain the attitude of the people to this aspect of caste ideology, *again indirectly*, we asked each and every "head" of the family-units and non-familial units surveyed to place himself or herself in a category according to his/her caste affiliation. The categories were three in the light of the traditionally ordained hierarchy ; viz. the top rank (or Category 1) occupied in West Bengal by the Brahmins, Vaidyas and Kayasthas, the middle rank (or Category 2) by the so-called "pure" castes from whom an orthodox Brahmin may take water, and the bottom rank (or Category 3) occupied by the remaining so-called "impure"

castes from whom an orthodox Brahmin cannot take water. The person concerned, however, need not have placed himself or herself in the same category as decreed by tradition, or he/she could refuse to classify himself/herself and thus denounce the caste system.

The upshot was that only a microscopic minority of the Hindus an city-town-village denounced the caste system; while in an overwhelming majority even the Muslims did not show any hesitation to classify themselves into caste-like categories in terms of inter-dining and inter-marriage between their functional groups and other appellations, like Mughal, Pathan, Sheikh, jola (weaver), khulu (oilpresser), etc. (item 1, Table 10).

Furthermore, even the Muslims were found to be aware of specific caste (*jat*) occupations for themselves, like the Hindus (items 2 and 3, Table 10).

Table 10

Attribute			Percentage to respective totals for each sector of West Bengal				
			City	Town	Village	Urban	Total
(1)			(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1. "Head" of family and non-familial units refusing to place themselves in caste hierarchy	Hindu		0.7	0.5	0.1	0.7	0.3
	Muslim		11	12	9	11	10
2. Gainfully occupied persons professedly without any <i>jat</i> (caste) occupation	Hindu		0	0	0	0	0
	Muslim		0	1	0	0.1	0
3. Gainfully occupied persons reporting ignorance of the nature of their <i>jat</i> occupation	Hindu		8	5	5	8	5
	Muslim		19	25	2	19	4

That is, not merely in terms of caste categorization in abstract but concretely as related to the people's livelihood, and referring not only to the Hindus but also to those who need not have been directly concerned with the system, the caste ideology is found to hold sway over the entire society irrespective of its rural-urban, or city-town-village, stratifications.<sup>6</sup>

Summarily, therefore, any sharp distinction drawn between urban and rural, or among city-town-village, in West Bengal would

be unreal in terms of the social and ideological life of the people. So that, whatever potentiality might have been created by the pattern of rural-urban migration, the concept of rural-urban dichotomy is not found to operate in this context.

## IV

The concept of rural-urban continuum thus comes up again for consideration. For it would be argued that even if it be accepted that there is not yet a specific urban brand of social organization as against a rural brand, or an urban mentality as distinct from a rural mentality, the rural-urban stratification effected in society in terms of economic organization and the consequent cultural impulses would have its role in due course in making this difference.

Here, of course, we find an assumption of causal (at any rate, concomitant) relation between the material culture or even more general cultural accomplishments of the people and their social life and ideological outlook. This is not corroborated by the facts already presented. Nevertheless, it would be useful to bring up the issue of rural-urban continuum because this is evidently in the minds of many who speak of urbanization of villages in terms of (a) closer contact with cities and towns by means of growing facilities for transport and communication, (b) electrification and the extension of market in rural areas, (c) establishment of schools, hospitals, etc., in villages; and so on.

Also, even if we do not subscribe to the above assumption, it would be useful to examine from its complimentary aspect whether the amenities of urban life are having an effect on the city and town people in moulding their social characteristics differently from the villagers. So that, either way, if not the concept of rural-urban dichotomy, the concept of rural-urban continuum would be applicable to the situation under reference.

Appropos, we may first examine the family organization of West Bengal villages as locally functioning units. Because, in 1960-61, extended families incorporating kins or affines not prescribed by the norm of patri-virilocal residence were found relatively more

frequently in towns and cities than in villages (Table 9); and the inference may be drawn therefrom that persons moving into urban areas demand and receive the privileges and obligations consequent to the operation of the joint family system. For in terms of the mental bond created among kins and affines because of the prevalence of this institution in society, one would expect in an unfamiliar place to become the inmate of a locally functioning nuclear or patri-virilocally joint family-unit of a kin or affine, and the latter would be correspondingly obliged to accord the privilege. (*vide*, Note 5 for details)

It will also be recalled, as illustrated earlier with data concerning villages around the town of Giridih in Bihar, that a course of migration of the rural folk from distant villages to nearer the urban centres can be legitimately inferred. Here, therefore, we may examine whether a continuum can be established in structural variations of the extended family type, or in variations between different family types, as belonging to villages arranged in a distance-scale from the nearest urban or "urbanized" centres.

I shall consider three time periods for the purpose, so that the system of variation to be examined may be high-lighted by three distinct phases in India's present course of development. The first would be 1951, the second 1956, and the last 1960-61; that is, at the beginnings of the First, Second, and the Third Five Year Plan, respectively.

We find, accordingly, that if the villages are arranged with respect to their distance from the nearest "urbanized" centres (viz. railway or steamer stations), no statistically significant differences are observed between the village-groups in terms of the family organization of their inhabitants (Table 11). That is, for the periods of 1951 and 1956 under consideration, these centres could not have functioned effectively as the focii for spreading differential values or impulses with respect to the family as a social institution.

Similarly, we notice that even if the villages are re-arranged with respect to their distance from the nearest towns (*viz.* sub-divisional headquarters) so as to bring them directly in line with the rural-urban spectrum, no sharp distinction is still visible between the village-groups for 1951, 1956, or 1960-61 (Table 12).<sup>7</sup>

Table 11

Family organization as forming co-resident and commensal kingroups	Percentage to respective totals for West Bengal villages in 1951 and 1956, the villages being categorized according to their road distance (in miles) from the nearest railway or steamer station							
	1951				1956			
	0-2	2-5	5-10	10+	0-2	2-5	5-10	10+
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
1 Non-familial	13±6	15±6	8±6	13±6	9±5	6±5	11±5	9±5
2 Nuclear	48±5	47±5	46±5	40±5	40±6	50±6	34±6	45±6
3 Extended	39±5	38±5	46±5	47±5	51±5	44±5	55±5	46±5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
4 Patri-virilocally joint	17±4	24±4	31±4	30±5	37±4	27±5	39±5	36±5
5 Otherwise extended	22±6	14±6	15±6	17±6	14±6	17±5	16±6	10±6

Table 12

Family organization as forming co-resident and commensal kingroups	Percentage to respective totals for West Bengal villages in 1951, 1956 and 1960-61, the villages being categorized according to their road distance (in miles) from the nearest towns							
	1951			1956			1960-61	
	0-10	10-20	20+	0-10	10-20	20+	0-10	10+
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
1 Non-familial	15	17	7	7	15	8	9	9
2 Nuclear	43	48	45	44	41	41	57	60
3 Extended	42	35	48	49	44	51	34	31
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
4 Patri-virilocally joint	25	19	31	37	33	36	25	24
5. Otherwise extended	17	16	17	12	11	15	9	7

So that, by linking up the above finding with what have been already observed in terms of city-town-village differences in family organization and familial integration, we may safely draw the conclusion that with respect to the family as a social institution neither the concept of rural-urban dichotomy nor that of rural-urban continuum is the active principle.

Details of caste practice and caste ideology, however, tell a slightly different story (although in their totality we have not noticed any rural-urban difference for 1960-61). But there, again, *prima facie* these details for the same time period of observation (1960-61) only leave us in a quandary as to whether rural-urban

continuum or rural-urban dichotomy should be the relevant concept to explain the subtle changes taking place in society in their respect

Thus to consider, first, the gainfully occupied persons who pursue their caste occupations, among the Hindus the process of rural-urban continuum is seen to be disturbed if the villages far away from towns are taken into account (item 1.1, Table 13). So that, in this respect, rural-urban continuum will have to be interpreted for the Hindus as corresponding to city-town-village *en bloc* only, and not by the successive categorization of the village-groups as befitting a clear enunciation of the rural-urban spectrum. For the Muslims, on the other hand, the concept of rural-urban continuum is precisely applicable for the same caste practice (item 1.2, Table 13)

Table 13

Caste Practice and Caste Ideology			Percentage to respective totals for West Bengal						
			City Town	Villages at distance from nearest town (in miles)				Rural	Urban
				0-10		10+			
				(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1.	Gainfully occupied persons with specific caste ( <i>jai</i> ) occupations and pursuing them		1. Hindu	10	15	20	7	16	10
			2. Muslim	4	13	28	79	35	4
2.	Of the gainfully occupied persons who have specific caste ( <i>jai</i> ) occupations but do not pursue them, those who with respect to the latter consider the status of their current occupations as	1 Equal	1. Hindu	23	36	42	49	45	24
			2. Muslim	12	21	56	72	56	12
		2 Not Equal	1. Hindu	66	40	41	33	38	64
			2. Muslim	30	2	33	15	32	30
		3 Not certain	1. Hindu	11	24	17	18	17	12
			2. Muslim	58	77	11	13	12	58
3.	Of the gainfully occupied Hindus who consider their current occupations as "not equal" to their <i>jai</i> occupations, those who consider the status of the former as "higher" than the latter			48	46	65	42	57	48
4.	Non-Brahmin Hindu "heads" of family-units and non-familial units who out of their total numbers place themselves in the caste hierarchy differently from what is traditionally ordained			27	27	14	13	14	27



Next we notice that out of the gainfully occupied persons who do not pursue their caste occupations those who consider their current occupations as "equal" in status to their caste occupations maintain the process of rural-urban continuum strictly for both the religious groups. But with respect to those who consider their current occupations as "not equal" to their caste occupations the process of rural-urban continuum is again disturbed among the Hindus, and neither rural-urban continuum nor rural-urban dichotomy is visible among the Muslims (*vide*, items 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.2.1, and 2.2.2, Table 13).

And with reference to the proportionate representation of those in either community who are "not certain" of the relative status of their current occupations to the caste occupations, no such order is visible among the categories "city-town-near village-distant village" as would conform to the principle of rural-urban continuum or dichotomy (items 2.3.1 and 2.3.2, Table 13). The only noticeable feature in this respect is that the bulk of the Muslims in urban areas are "not certain" of the relative status of their current occupations possibly because the *exact nature* of their caste occupations has faded out from their memory much more rapidly than from that of their rural counterpart (*vide*, Note 6).

Lastly, considering the Hindus only for the above reason, we notice that with respect to those of them who regard their current occupations as "higher" in status than their caste occupations rural-urban dichotomy is a more relevant concept than rural-urban continuum, if any such concept will have to be applied at all (item 3, Table 13).

Evidently, the situation is confusing. For, out of the five inter-dependent attributes considered for the Hindus, in the case of only one the situation speaks clearly for rural-urban continuum, for two the same but not so consistently, for another neither rural-urban continuum nor rural-urban dichotomy, and for still another rural-urban dichotomy appears to be a little more consistent process than rural-urban continuum. Likewise, out of the four attributes considered for the Muslims, which are identical to the first four considered for the Hindus, two represent clearly rural-urban continuum and the other two neither rural-urban continuum nor rural-urban dichotomy.

We are thus faced with a stalemate even when examining details of one and the same phenomenon in order that any underlying pattern of rural-urban differences may be brought up to the surface.

Table 14

Percentage to totals for respective classifying categories under col (1)							
Classifying categories for persons under cols (2)-(7)		Out of the total gainfully occupied with caste ( <i>jat</i> ) occupations, those who pursue the same	Out of the gainfully occupied persons who do not pursue their <i>jat</i> occupations, those who rate the relative status of their current occupations as			Out of the gainfully occupied persons who consider their current occupations as "not equal" to their <i>jat</i> occupations, those who rate the former as "higher" than the latter	Out of total non-Brahmin Hindu "heads" of family and non-family units, those who deviate from orthodox ranking in placing themselves in the caste hierarchy
			Equal	Not Equal	Not certain		
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1	Agriculture	23	52	33	15	52	15
2	Handicraft production	23	52	32	16	50	14
3	Machine industries	15	14	67	19	59	19
4	Trade and commerce	11	34	51	15	45	27
5	Profession & Services of national economy	6	24	57	19	44	26
6	Any other	2	27	50	23	40	15
7	None	—	—	—	—	—	28
1	Non-manual	11	44	43	13	85	20
2	Type of job	7	37	47	16	50	22
3	"	2	14	65	21	32	24
4	Manual performed	25	52	35	13	57	16
5	skilled	11	32	50	18	26	28
6	semi-skilled	20	28	47	25	33	11
7	unskilled	15	50	37	13	72	20
1	Employer	15	26	52	22	40	22
2	Employee	10	57	33	10	60	13
3	Own account worker	25	37	39	24	39	15
1	None	20	42	45	13	45	22
2	Below matriculation	16	35	52	13	60	23
3	Matriculation & above	6	27	57	16	36	34
1	Hindu	3	46	38	16	58	16
2	"	11	37	45	18	60	15
3	"	25	49	41	10	14	—
4	Muslim	28	45	25	30	37	—
5	"	29	45	25	30	37	—
6	All social strata combined	16	38	45	17	48	19

Note — Explanations as for Table 5

[Note — Explanations as for Table 5]

The situation, not infrequently encountered in sociological investigation of a problem in India, reminds us of the Indian proverb of seven blind men and the elephant. For different perspectives, or even different attributes belonging to one particular social characteristic, are seen to lead to different inferences. Pursuantly, from one set of data we may assert that there is no rural-urban difference, from another that there is rural-urban dichotomy, and from still another that there is rural-urban continuum.

We should examine, therefore, how such kaleidoscopic relations are effected. That is, whether in the maze of contradictory associations between respective social characteristics and the specific nature of rural-urban difference as outlined above, a link can be drawn between the apparently irreconcilable situations.

Apropos, we first notice that while stating or evaluating their current occupations as "same", "equal", or "not equal" to the caste occupations, the gainfully occupied persons have tended to indicate that the rural folk are more traditional in their social organization than the townsfolk and the townsfolk more than the city dwellers. We notice further that in terms of rating their current occupations as "higher" in status than their caste occupations the rural people as a whole have tended to indicate that either they are determined to enhance their societal position by taking to such occupations as should be rated higher than their current occupations or they deliberately rationalize the relative status of their current occupations with the same aim in view. This, again, would support the contention that both in practice and in ideology the rustics are much more steeped in tradition than the urbanites.

But we find concurrently that the above attributes of caste practice and caste "ideology" are associated with specific economic strata which are so distributed in the city-town-village sectors of West Bengal that the apparent operation of the concept of rural-urban continuum or of rural-urban dichotomy in respect of these attributes is indicated thereby (*vide*, Tables 14 and 15). Further, the nature of association of these attributes with respective economic strata points out that the course of evaluation of the current occupations of the gainfully occupied persons in terms of their caste occupations merely conforms to their traditional outlook.<sup>8</sup>

Table 15

Classifying categories for the gainfully occupied persons			Percentage to respective totals for West Bengal				
			City	Town	Village	Urban	Total
	(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1. Affiliation to sectors of national economy	1	Agriculture	3	6	90	3	51
	2	Handicraft production	3	2	1	3	3
	3	Machine industries	16	1	3	15	8
	4	Trade and commerce	28	28	3	28	15
	5	Profession and services	33	31	2	33	17
	6	Any other	17	32	1	18	6
Total			100	100	100	100	100
2. Type of job performed	1	Non-manual high grade	11	22	9	11	10
	2	„ middle grade	30	40	5	30	12
	3	„ low grade	8	4	1	8	4
	4	Manual skilled	22	18	32	22	29
	5	„ semi-skilled	22	14	22	22	22
	6	„ unskilled	7	2	31	7	23
Total			100	100	100	100	100
3. Activity status	1.	Employer	6	10	8	6	7
	2	Employee	72	66	53	72	58
	3	Own-account worker	22	24	39	22	35
Total			100	100	100	100	100
4. Education	1	None	23	16	77	23	51
	2	Below matriculation	44	34	20	43	32
	3	Matriculation & above	33	50	3	34	17
Total			100	100	100	100	100
5. Religion and caste	1	Hindu - high castes	26	54	6	27	15
	2	„ - middle castes	28	25	35	28	30
	3	„ - low castes	34	18	28	33	29
	4	Muslim - high rank	3	1	13	3	10
	5	„ - others	7	2	12	7	12
	6	Other religious groups	2	0	6	2	4
Total			100	100	100	100	100

[ Note —Explanations as for Table 5 ]

So that, as noted earlier for the family as a social institution, also with respect to caste as another vital institution in the society under reference, the application of the concept of rural-urban dichotomy or of rural-urban continuum is seen to be only coincidental with the economic organization of society, and not as the indicator of any course of social change taking place therein. In short, neither concept is particularly relevant in the present context.

## V

What does the situation signify in that case? And what is, then, the role of towns (especially small towns) in functioning, or as may be intended to function, as the lever to usher in a desired course of developmental changes in society?

Vis-a-vis these two final questions, I should first repeat what I had stated at the beginning of our examination of the urban versus rural *way of life*. Namely, rural-urban differences are certainly there in society with respect to its economic organization and the consequent societal stratification. This has also been indicated as a by-product to the above course of analysis. So that, in this regard, the towns may function as the "bridge" between cities, on the one hand, and the villages, on the other, and, therefore, the relevance of such a distinction to the economic planning of society and the formulation of appropriate policies in terms of rural-urban continuum (in this respect) need not be doubted.

It is also generally agreed that the above differentiation in society has a definite bearing upon the material culture of the people, and possibly also on such other facets of their cultural life as give a veneer of distinction the most noticeable among the city people, less so among town dwellers, and the least among the rural folk. So that with a view to increasingly improve the material condition of the people and, in consequence, their cultural attainments from that standpoint, it would be valid to bring in the question of relative usefulness of the concepts of rural-urban dichotomy and rural-urban continuum. And, as the latter concept appears to be contextually more relevant, the towns (especially the

small towns) may be made use of as the focus for the implementation of the desired course of change in that direction

But, in the last analysis, it is the change *within* the social organism, as distinguished from the changes effected on its surface, that is what we are aspiring for. And, in that context, the question remains unanswered as how to implement the desired course of change in the social and ideological life of the people. That is, how *social change*, as distinguished from *cultural change*, can be brought about in the society under consideration.

For a causal or concomitant relation between urban living and this course of change is not revealed from an examination of the *social facts* presented in the foregoing pages. Even so, would it be justified to assume that the subtle rural-urban differences noticed in the operation of the two major social institutions examined are the harbingers of a new way of life ?

On this point we may note that it is the urban dwellers, and it is the people having education of at least the matriculation standard and belonging to the topmost Hindu castes, who deviate sharply from the traditionally ordained caste hierarchy (Tables 14 and 16). We may further point out that it is the rural folks and the other Hindu castes, and those having education of at least the matriculation standard, who rate their current occupations more frequently as "higher" than their caste occupations. Contrariwise, it is more the rustics than the urbanites, and the Muslims and other Hindu castes, and those having no education or below the matriculation standard, who either pursue their caste occupations or rate their current occupations as of equal status to them (*vide*, Tables 13-16).

Do these facts suggest, therefore, that the forebearers of the stipulated course of social change are the educated persons and the Hindus of the topmost castes who are, again, better off economically in a relative sense ? Such a deduction would be extremely fallacious.

For we may recall that such people maintain the extended family organization much more frequently than their counter-parts in society (cols. 4 and 6, Table 5). We may also recapitulate that the observed rural-urban differentials, suggesting social change referred merely to the realignment of social groups within the institutions under reference, in conformity with the better financial position and the relatively higher education of the individuals and

the groups concerned. They need not, therefore, signify a break (or even an attempt to break) through the traditional social organization and ideological orientation.

Table 16

Classifying categories for the non-Brahmin Hindu family-units and non-familial units				Percentage to respective totals for West Bengal				
				City	Town	Village	Urban	Total
(1)				(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1	Affiliation to sectors of national economy	1	Agriculture	0	0	88	0	79
		2	Handicraft production	8	1	2	8	3
		3	Machine industries	17	0	0	16	4
		4	Trade and commerce	35	34	4	35	7
		5	Profession and services	25	40	3	26	4
		6	Any other	14	25	2	14	2
		7	None	1	0	1	1	1
Total				100	100	100	100	100
2	Type of job performed	1	Non-manual high grade	8	15	10	8	10
		2	„ middle grade	25	39	5	26	7
		3	„ low grade	9	0	1	9	1
		4	Manual skilled	22	23	30	22	29
		5	„ semi-skilled	21	23	27	21	27
		6	„ unskilled	15	0	27	14	96
Total				100	100	100	100	100
3	Activity status	1	Employer	5	15	15	7	13
		2	Employee	72	58	40	70	46
		3	Own-account worker	23	27	45	23	41
Total				100	100	100	100	100
4	Education	1	None	25	18	64	25	59
		2	Below matriculation	44	38	30	44	32
		3	Matriculation & above	31	44	6	31	9
Total				100	100	100	100	100
5	Religion and caste	1	Hindu - high castes	32	60	16	33	17
		2	„ - middle castes	31	24	39	31	39
		3	„ - low castes	32	16	45	36	44
Total				100	100	100	100	100

[ Note — Explanations as for Table 5 ]

Indeed, insofar as caste practices and caste ideology are concerned, evidences of such *internal* changes within the caste system without denouncing the institution as such abounds in India's history. And that education and better economic conditions provide stimuli for such ventures have been recorded as early as in 1910. O'Malley's comment in this context, though old by half a century, still rings true. To quote from one of his later writings (O'Malley 1932 : 175-176) :

"On a survey of the whole situation it may be said that though there is a certain neglect of some canons of conduct, the lines of cleavage between different castes have been neither obliterated nor obscured. There is a tendency, more especially among the educated sections of the upper classes, to abandon or modify caste customs, but there is no general revolt against the system. Forms may be changed, but fundamentally caste remains the same. Those who would sweep away abuses would leave the main edifice intact. Even untouchables, in all their anxiety to remove the stigma of birth, rarely suggest the total abolition of caste. The rebellion of these and other low castes against the place assigned to them in the system rests on the assumption that that system will remain. Hindu reformers who condemn untouchability also maintain that a caste system, though not perhaps in its present form, is essential to Hinduism."

And, as regards the Muslims, to quote O'Malley again (O'Malley 1913 : 495) .

"There is properly no caste system among the followers of the Prophet. All are on a religious equality, they meet and worship in the same mosque, and are divided into distinct groups, which are socially separate. Occupation, transmitted from generation to generation, has given rise to divisions characteristic as those of the Hindu functional castes. . . . There are also restrictions on eating together, though, according to their religion, a Mussalman cannot be degraded by taking food from another of a lower status. . . . On the other hand, there is a tendency for the functional groups to call themselves Sheikhs, a generic name which is coming into use as a designation for all but Saiyads, Mughals and Pathans. In some parts this has gone so far, that Sheikh is said to be a name for the main caste, while the functional groups are referred to as Sheikh sub-castes. This in itself serves to show how far the Mussalmans of Bengal have assimilated Hindu ideas."

More than two generations have passed since O'Malley wrote those lines. But the status quo is still maintained in the functioning of this important institution in society, with rearrangement taking



place *within* its sphere of influence just as it has been from much earlier times and all over India (Mukherjee, 1958) Why is that so ?

Similarly, with respect to the operation of the joint family system questions have been raised by social scientists as to whether it is breaking down or only realigning its forces and structural arrangements in the present situation To quote what Nimkoff wrote as recently as in 1959 (Nimkoff 1959 34):

"In studying family changes, some problems are encountered, some perhaps peculiar to India, most doubtless of a more general nature There is in India, the writer observes, a bias in favour of the joint family, which is scarcely surprising since this is the 'ideal type', the type traditionally most common among the elite, the higher castes and those with most property, and therefore the family type most highly regarded by the lower castes . . . This bias, if not recognised, can distort the sociologist's perception and judgement of the social reality.

The second caution is that family changes may be matters of degrees as well as of kind, and failures to recognize the difference may be serious in its consequences. Thus the writer heard arguments while in India as to whether the joint family was 'disappearing' and the notion of the disappearance of the joint family was called a myth, as indeed it is "

Again, the question arises: Why is that so ?

Evidently, the answer to this question, fundamental to the social development of the people concerned, cannot be obtained in terms of rural-urban differentials, or, for that matter, from a formal examination of various forms of social stratification. It requires looking into the *soft spots* in the social organism, irrespective of its rural-urban or other forms of formal stratification.

Such as, if the educated persons are to be the torch-bearers of progress in this respect, the *content* of the education offered to them and their consequent reactions would require examination so as to determine the soft spots through which the desired course of change may be implemented in the society under reference. Or, if the

Hindu high caste people are to be the precursors of a new way of life, to take another hypothetical case for purposes of illustration, the potentiality of germination of such a life among them would need careful investigation with the same aim in view.

Either way, or in more ways than the above two, the soft spots in the social organism require careful and sustained exploration. After that, their relative occurrence in, and/or their relative importance to, city-town-village stratification of society may decide whether rural-urban dichotomy or rural-urban continuum would be the suitable concept to formulate and execute relevant policies for social development and whether the small towns would have a role to play in that context.

To my knowledge, such a course of investigation has scarcely been undertaken rigorously and in concretely objective terms; that is, without indulging in esoteric characterization and evaluation of social groups and individuals and deducing therefrom the nature of rural-urban differences and relationships. On the other side, the examination of formal associations between patterns of migration, administrative and political divisions, cross-cultural factors, and occupational and industrial profiles of settlement of social groups and individuals, etc., does not lead us to a fruitful inference; although this is undoubtedly the primary stage in the course of our researches into the problem under reference.

For the present, therefore, I may be justified to conclude this chapter with the note that: (1) there is not yet any evidence of significant rural-urban difference with reference to the basic problem of social development, (2) a causal or concomitant relation between cultural changes due to urban living or urbanization and "social" development cannot be legitimately deduced, and so (3) the concept of rural-urban dichotomy or rural-urban continuum need not be meaningful in the context of urbanization and social transformation in India at the moment.<sup>9</sup>

## NOTES

1. Data contained in all the tables except in Tables 1, 11 and 12 were obtained from a stratified random sample survey of more than 4000 co-resident and commensal kingroups from the cities of Calcutta and Howrah, four towns of Adra, Berhampore, Contai and

Siliguri, and 20 villages in West Bengal. The villages, which were completely enumerated, were randomly selected after stratifying the rural area of West Bengal by its ecological zones and sub-divisions. The ecological zones referred to the riverine plain area, arid plain area, coastal belt, and the sub-Himalayan forest belt. (About the cities and the sampled towns, from which co-resident and commensal kingroups were sampled as ultimate units in successive stages, see Note 2.)

The survey was conducted under my guidance in 1960-61 by the Sociological Research Unit, of the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, as a part of the study sponsored by the Research Programmes Committee, Planning Commission, Government of India, under the title: "Changes in Family Structures—Urban/Rural—West Bengal".

Table I refers to a study of intra-village, inter-village, and rural-urban relations centering round Giridih township in Bihar, which is being conducted under my guidance by the Sociological Research Unit since 1958, and has already covered more than 500 villages within a radial distance of 15 miles from the township.

Tables II and III refer to the data collected by the National Sample Survey Organization in West Bengal in Rounds II and III for 1951 and Round X for 1956; covering 82 sampled villages for the 1951 and 92 sampled villages for the 1956 data.

The complete enumeration of the co-resident and commensal kingroups in Durgapur and Giridih townships, mentioned in the chapter, were also conducted under my guidance by the Sociological Research Unit as preliminary investigations into the social structure of these towns.

My thanks are due to (1) The Research Programmes Committee of the Planning Commission, Government of India, for the permission to use the data for relevant tables from the report under preparation; and (2) my colleagues Suraj Bandyopadhyay, Kumarananda Chattopadhyay, Sunil Bose, Prafulla Chakravarty, Bani Dey, Biswanath Roy, Bibhas Sasmal, and Prodyot Mohalanobis for the technical assistance received from them in the processing of the data and in ancillary activities.

2. The geographical area covered in terms of the cities of Calcutta and Howrah represents the entire city-sector of the State

of West Bengal according to the 1951 Census, excluding the urban settlements of Bhatpara and Kharagpur which apart from their population density are in no way different from other urban settlements labelled as towns. The four towns (Adra, Berhampore, Contai and Siliguri) were drawn at random from all the towns (and the remaining two town-like cities) falling respectively in four historical cum ecological zones of the State barring the Himalayan region. Thus the two cities and the four selected towns would be expected to indicate the range of variation within the urban area of West Bengal as further subject to historical and ecological differences within its territory.

Apart from the way the towns were selected, they may be compared and contrasted in terms of their individual characteristics. Thus Berhampore and Contai were labelled as "administrative towns" for the 1951 Census, with Berhampore (declared as a town in 1872) having a history going back more than hundred years and Contai (a place for the collection and export of agricultural products from the surrounding villages) being elevated to the status only in 1931. Similarly, Adra and Siliguri, born in 1951 and 1941 respectively, have the same epithet of "railway town"; but Adra is virtually composed of railway employees only who live in apartment houses or bungalows allotted to them by the railway authorities, while the majority of inhabitants of Siliguri has nothing to do with the railways except being passengers in the train when the occasion arises.

These details that I have given are not for the purpose of writing a critique on the 1951 census classification of towns in West Bengal or in India. All that I wish to convey is that, given the 1951 census demarcation of rural and urban areas in West Bengal, the four towns and the two cities should provide us with a sufficiently wide canvas to represent the varying characteristics of the urban areas of the State.

3. The successively larger share of nuclear family-units to the respective totals of locally functioning units in the city-town-village sectors of West Bengal could be accounted for, at least partly, by the fact that these three sectors have correspondingly smaller share of non-familial units. And that would tend to indicate that there is

less distinction between rural and urban areas, or between city-town-village, in the familial organization of the people as of the nuclear or the extended type than is apparent if the non-familial units also are taken into account.

But the fact remains, all the same, that even when only the family-units are taken into consideration the relative importance of the nuclear family type as against the extended family type is higher in the rural than in the urban areas (item 4, Table 4). Also, either way, the investigation does not show that there are relatively more extended families in villages than in towns and cities.

4. With reference to its average for all social strata combined, the nuclear family type is found to be proportionately over-represented in the agricultural sector of the national economy and among those who are semi-skilled or unskilled manual workers (col. 3, Table 5). So that, the argument would follow, as the bulk of the rural mass are sharecroppers or agricultural labourers (col. 4, Table 6), they conform to the above specifications for over-representation because of the financial constraint imposed upon them by their economic life against the maintenance of the extended family organization. And the consequence is that nuclear family-units are found the most frequently in the rural sector of West Bengal.

Likewise, the extended family type is over-represented in the trade and commerce sector of the national economy and among those who are engaged in high or middle grade non-manual occupations or in skilled manual occupations (as administrators, executives, clerks, lawyers, doctors, technicians, artisans, etc.), and who are either employers or own-account workers (col. 4, Table 5). Therefore, as those belonging to these social strata are likely to have the economic potentiality to continue with the extended family organization, and as, taken together, these strata are fairly evenly distributed over the city-town-village sectors of West Bengal (Table 6), the representation of the extended family type remains virtually the same for all these three sectors.

Lastly, the non-familial unit as a corollary to the co-resident and commensal kingroups is over-represented in the manufacture, trade, service and ancillary sectors of the national economy and among those who are engaged in low-grade non-manual occupations as office bearers, domestic help, etc., or are unemployed (col. 2,

Table 5). Hence, it being highly associated with such industries and occupations as are found the most frequently in cities, next in towns, and the least in villages (Table 6), its representation follows a trend counter to that noted for the nuclear family type.

5. The point made regarding the absence of rural-urban difference with respect to the family as a social institution is further clarified if we look into the varying structures of the extended family organization in city-town-village sectors of West Bengal both as locally functioning units and in the mental dimension of the people.

As the extended family-units may comprise kinship relation of any variety and distinction beyond what is prescribed for the nuclear family type as only *one set* of conjugal, parental and sibling relations, obviously their structural classification can be made as elaborate as one would like to (Mukherjee 1962 . 352-398 ; 1963). For our purpose, however, we may take into account only four varieties of this family type.

The first would, accordingly comprise only those extended family-units which are constituted strictly in terms of patri-virilocal residence of their members. The second would include all such patri-virilocally joint families which contain, in addition, such kins or affines as have thus deflected the units from maintaining the patri-virilocal norm of residence for *all* their constituent members. The third would represent nuclear families with such additional kinds or affines as should not belong to the units in terms of patri-virilocal norm of residence. And the fourth would be a mixed bag containing all other varieties of the extended family type.

Such distinctions within the class of extended family type would be relevant to our present discussion because that variety of this type which maintains the patri-virilocal norm of residence for all the constituent members of the respective units is acknowledged to be traditionally ordained. So that we may examine rural-urban differences in terms of deviation, if any, from such a norm as found in practice and as desired by those who have formed the extended family organization.

We find, contextually, that the patri-virilocally joint family organisation as a locally functioning unit is more frequent in the

rural than in the urban sector of West Bengal ; but patri-viril locally joint of nuclear family organization with additional kin(s) or affine(s) "grafted" on to it is relatively more frequent in cities and towns than in villages (item 1, Table 9). Whereas, in the mental dimension of the people no such variation in the organization of the extended family type is noticeable ; only the people are found to think more in terms of strictly patri-viril local joint family organization than is effected in practice either in the urban or in the rural area (item 2, Table 9).

The finding is, evidently, indicative of the fact that people moving into cities and towns (obviously in search of a better livelihood) live singly or by grafting themselves on to families of their kins or affines pursuant to the implicit privileges and obligations *sui generis* to the operation of the joint family system. For in terms of the mental bond created among kins and affines because of the prevalence of this institution, one would expect in an unfamiliar place to become the inmate of a locally functioning nuclear or patri-viril locally joint family-unit of a kin or affine, and the latter would be correspondingly obliged to accord the privilege.

We may also underline the important fact that even those units which were maintaining the nuclear family organization in cities and towns are not exempted from this form of obligation (viz. item 1.3, Table 9).

The conclusion is thus obvious. Namely, rural folks may move into urban areas singly or sometimes in nuclear units and they may remain in cities and towns as distinct co-resident and commensal units or by grafting themselves on to the locally functioning family-units of their kins or affines ; but the process does not change their orientation to the familial organization they had lived in previously, or of those who in the urban areas have apparently dissociated themselves from the joint family organization by setting up nuclear units.

In short, with respect to the family as a social institution, there is no evidence pointing towards the emergence of an urban (or city) *way of life* as distinct from the rural.

6. It is true that the Muslim urban dwellers are found to be proportionately more ignorant of the exact *nature* of their caste

occupations than the Muslim villagers. But, evidently, to the Muslim caste-affiliation and its concomitants are not religious tenets. They refer to a process of acculturation going on for centuries. It is not improbable, therefore, than in urban areas where occupational diversity is much more pronounced than in villages and where the process of their acculturation is offset by the possibility for more frequent contact of the Muslims with other religious groups, they would tend to forget (or feign to forget) the nature of their caste occupations in larger numbers than their compatriots in villages.

The point to stress, however, in this context is that even in urban areas virtually none of the gainfully occupied Muslims declared that they had *no* caste occupation. Only the exact nature of that occupation has been forgotten by relatively more of them than their compatriots in villages.

7. Either way, however, certain incipient trends observed for 1951, would be worthy of note.

Namely, in 1951, the nuclear family type tended to have, proportionately, a heavier representation in villages near the railway or steamer stations, while a counter-trend was suggested for the patri-virilocally joint family type (cols. 2-5, Table 11). And in both cases, the trend of variation was found to be commensurate with the principle of *intra-rural* continuum from the "urbanized" centres to the far away villages.

In terms of the distance of the same villages from the nearest towns, on the other hand, the trend of variation in family organization for 1951 appears to have been commensurate more with the principle of *intra-rural dichotomy* than continuum. Because there were proportionately more non-familial units in the villages nearer the towns than at a very large distance, while the patri-virilocally joint family-units were represented a little more heavily in the very distant villages than elsewhere in the rural area (cols. 2-4 Table 12).

The two trends of variation, apparently contradictory, are however amenable to a logical explanation. Namely, in 1951 (that is, before the introduction of a planned programme for India's economic development), a rural-urban dichotomy might have been reflected in the pattern of migration by the hesitation of the rural folks (or by the facilities available to them) to move straight into



urban centres. Accordingly, we see the picture of intra-rural dichotomy with respect to the villages nearer the towns and at a large distance ; the rustics having moved singly in far greater proportion to the urban fringe from far away villages evidently in search of a better livelihood for themselves as well as for their families at home.

And, simultaneously, we could notice that in successively larger proportions of forming nuclear family-units the rural folk were tending to settle around the "urbanized" centres where a railway or a steamer station was situated. Because opportunities for work and earnings within the rural sector of the national economy were obviously the largest in these regions, and they became increasingly less as one moved towards the heart of the rural area.

So that in the total rural scene we could observe intra-rural continuum with respect to the "urbanized" centres functioning, however rudimentarily, as focii for spreading differential values or impulses ; and, at the same time, we could discern an incipient intra-rural dichotomy with reference to rural-urban differences in the society as a whole. In sum, therefore, the situation in 1951 appears amenable to the application of the concept of rural-urban continuum with respect to the family as a social institution.

But the picture thus conjured up, the logical explanation thus engineered, proves to be fallacious or redundant if we examine the successive patterns of change in 1956 and 1960-61. For, by 1956 it is seen that the differences noticed for 1951 were levelled up, and in 1960-61 the course of levelling up is found to have been still better enforced than in 1956 (cols. 6-9, Table II ; cols. 5-9, Table 12). That is, the situation within the rural sector of West Bengal refers, apparently, to *status quo ante* in the period 1951-61 ; viz. to a reversal to the homogeneous rural society in so far as its familial organization is concerned.

This is possibly due to the fact that by 1956, and more so by 1960-61, economic planning had induced more and more people to move directly to cities and towns without loitering in villages at the urban periphery. Consequently, in 1960-61, the proportionate representations of the non-familial units suggest the pattern of city-town-village continuum but do not indicate any intra-rural dichotomy.

Equally it is possible that due to the wide facilities for work and earnings which have opened up simultaneously all over the country at the initiative of the Community Development and similar agencies, those who during 1951—61 settled down in urban fringes, or in places successively nearer to the "urbanized" centres, did so by forming family organization of the same type as they had earlier. So that the proportionate representations of the nuclear and the extended family types became the 'same all over the rural area in conformity with the point made earlier that given the indispensable financial basis the people appear to be prone to resume the family organization they had lived in previously irrespective of any value differentials due to "urbanization".

However, without taking recourse to either or both of the above conjectures (although they appear relevant and appropriate), we notice the obvious fact that isolated instances may speak in favour of rural-urban continuum but in the totality of the situation they are hardly of any consequence.

8. We find that in the light of their proportionate representation for all strata combined the gainfully occupied persons who pursue their caste occupations or rate their current occupations as "equal" in status to their caste occupations are over-represented in the agriculture and handicraft production sectors of the national economy, among the skilled manual workers, and for the activity status of own-account worker (cols. 2-3, Table 14). That is, these are, in the main, the self-sufficient, peasants and craftsmen who either are still pursuing their caste occupations or have taken to variants of equal status in terms of the traditional arrangement.

We also note that taken the above attributes together such people are the most frequently found in villages, less frequently in towns, and the least in cities (Table 15). So that the ordering of rural-urban continuum, as found previously in the context of these two attributes, registers the mere fact that the economic organization of society has thus arranged the people into its rural and urban sectors.

Similarly, we find that the gainfully occupied persons who consider their current occupations as "not equal" to their caste

occupations are distinctly over-represented in the manufacturing industries and the service sector of the national economy and among non-manual low-grade workers like office bearers, peons, watchmen, etc. (col. 4, Table 14). This form of evaluation, again, would follow naturally from a traditional outlook. And we note, contextually, that since the relevant societal strata are heavily weighted in favour of cities and next of towns (Table 15), we come across the previously recorded ordering of rural-urban continuum for this attribute as due to the same reason as noted for the above ones

Likewise, we find that the gainfully occupied persons who are "not certain" of the relative status of their current to the caste occupations are over-represented in the "miscellaneous" sector of the national economy, among unskilled manual workers or low-grade non-manual workers (like domestic help) who in terms of their traditional understanding are very likely to be uncertain of the relative status of their current to the caste occupations (col. 5, Table 14). And since these societal strata are contradictorily weighted by city-town-village spectrum of society (Table 15), this attribute does neither indicate the process of rural-urban continuum nor that of rural-urban dichotomy. So here also we notice that the absence of rural-urban difference with respect to an attribute is effected by the characteristic economic organization of society.

Proceeding further, we find that the gainfully occupied persons who declare their current occupations as "not equal" to their caste occupations and rate them as "higher" in status to the latter are over-represented in both the manufacturing industries and the agricultural sector of the national economy, among high-grade non-manual workers (like executive, etc.) as well as among skilled-manual workers, and among both employers and own-account workers (col. 6, Table 14). So that, as the societal strata like agriculture and manufacturing industries maintain clear-cut rural-urban dichotomy while the above two occupational strata as well as those of employers and own-account workers tend to maintain rural-urban continuum (Table 15), we are faced with a situation which may be interpreted as rural-urban dichotomy but with reservations. And we notice simultaneously that the nature of

the occupations and the relations of production involved are such that they may be rated, on their intrinsic merit, as higher than the caste occupations, especially by those Hindus who do not belong to the top rank (item 5, Table 14).

9. My conclusions may be disputed on the ground that I have restricted myself to only one part of India, and so I have no right to speak for the Republic as a whole. It is a relevant point. Even so, the issues I have brought up can be utilized to form hypotheses for a proper evaluation of rural-urban differences and interrelations in India, with special reference to the role of small towns in planned development.

Contextually, it may be useful to take note of the concept of *degree of urbanization*. For, according to Gibbs (1961 : 464) :

“It has been suggested that rural-urban differences historically tend to bear a close relation to the degree of urbanization. The random observations made to date suggest a fairly uniform pattern. In the early stages of urbanization when a small per cent of the total population resides in cities, the differences are at a minimum; but as time passes and urbanization increases, rural-urban contrasts rapidly become more and more prominent. This process does not continue indefinitely, however, for as the degree of urbanization reaches higher levels, differences between the two become less pronounced.”

# An Assumption and the Findings

## ECONOMIC GROWTH AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF INDUSTRIAL LOCATION

### I

Although in terms of its thesis of *urbanization and social transformation of India today* Chapter 2 pointed to a negative conclusion, it indicated a positive association (however rudimentarily) between the apparent or real instances of "social change" and the economic organization of society. This brings us to the common assumption that "social groups" defined primarily in terms of their economic characteristics (as well as those having a direct relation with the economic status of a person, such as, his/her educational attainment) are, respectively, the proponents and opponents of the spread of "new values" in society. In the present chapter, therefore, I shall examine this assumption on "social change".<sup>1</sup>

The assumption, however, is not always formulated precisely. Its best formulation perhaps is in terms of "economic growth and the sociology of industrial location". For that frame of reference is believed to high-light the relevant findings. Pursuantly, the following discussion would be confined virtually to this frame.

But this would require some elucidations at the outset. Because the frame calls for a comparative examination of

“industrial” and “non-industrial” settlements (a) in terms of what is purported to be economic growth and (b) in reference to what should be regarded as the subject matter of sociology. The field of attention thus becomes immensely large and the focus of attention often blurred, especially in the Indian context.

For the division of the field into the industrial and non-industrial sectors with reference to the people involved *as well as* the “sites” where the industries are located is hardly precise; an appreciable number of these people continuing to maintain an “economic” and more pronouncedly “a “social” footing elsewhere. Also what should be considered as the “sociology of industrial location” is usually a matter of opinion, frequently leading to disputes at the very beginning of any discussion on the topic.

Additionally, the problem is complicated by the connotation to be given to the phrase “economic growth”. Would it refer to the “planned” economic sector of India or both her planned and “not-planned” economic sectors since 1950, or merely the course of economic changes leading to the emergence of more and more “industrial” locations in India (at whatever pace it may have taken place) in the pre-1950 *and* later?

With the information available to us, it is not possible therefore to describe unequivocally the relation between “economic growth” and “*sociology* of industrial location” in India today. We may, however, try to develop a model for the collection of necessary data and their analysis. So that, whether or not the model would require revision or even replacement in the end, eventually we may be able to say something definite on the subject

To begin with, therefore, we may take into consideration three *types of location* while bearing in mind their further qualification in the light of the specifications for “economic growth”. These three types would be: (1) where the “industrial” (essentially “mechanized manufacture”) sector of the national economy is the dominant constituent, and (2) where the above is an important but not the dominant constituent, and (3) where the above is not at all a constituent or a rudimentary one.

As to the “sociology” of these locations, we face a greater difficulty in enumerating its determinants or even the dimensions

of observation, analysis and interpretation. Certain characteristics strike use in the eye. They may be summed up by the fact that the industrial locations comprise people of heterogeneous cultural background—*transmitted* and *acquired*; and, by and large, the degree of heterogeneity in this respect rises or falls according to the relative importance of these locations. Because, on the one side, their economic potentiality as well as the momentum they have generated at a point in time draws more or less people from many or few parts of India; these people representing different cultural make-up as transmitted by their affiliation to respective kinds of involuntary groupings in Indian society like region, language, religion, caste, etc. On the other, in terms of the different orders of “cultural” accomplishment the constituents of the above involuntary groups may attain in these locations (as dependent upon the relative availability of diverse cultural objects and facilities therein and the differential “purchasing power” of these individuals to obtain them), they are further differentiated by the cultural values acquired currently.

Therefore, in the light of the transmitted and acquired differences in their cultural make-up, various “social groups” may be identified in the respective types of industrial location in order to represent their structural configurations. But what would distinctions in the coverage of such “social groups” mean in terms of the social process at work? Does their varying agglomeration in number, quantity or successive orders of complexity refer *ipso facto* to the emergence of a *new* social system in India on the basis of economic growth and the emergence and expansion of industrial locations?

Such a deduction would have been justified if we were entitled to infer different kinds of *social and ideological behaviour* in terms of differences in the attainment of *cultural objects and facilities*. But can we readily draw such an inference? Contrariwise, may we not find in the situation an illustration of the old adage “Scratch a Russian and find a Tatar” by paraphrasing it as: “Scratch an Indian and find a Patriarch”?

This appears to be the crux of the issue. An answer to the above question (with the precise recording of any deviation therefor) should lead us to the first base of understanding the dynamics

of prevailing social forces—the traditional ones (good or bad) and the desired ones (old or new). And that attempt, in my opinion, would be the initial step towards a “sociology of industrial location”. For the sociologist’s interest in any “location” reflects that of the society at large. And, therefore, he would be fundamentally concerned with the “sociology of industrial location” as the indicator of any process of social change ; industrialism being a powerful and a characteristic (or desired) force in virtually all societies today.<sup>2</sup>

So how may we go about the task ? One attempt, frequently followed in India, is “opinion survey”. With proper formulation of relevant questions, their sequential arrangement, and built-in checks in the enquiry-schedules, we expect to gauge whether the value-system of the people under reference has undergone (or is undergoing) a course of change from an assumed base. But where do we usually (although not invariably) land with such an attempt ?

To my knowledge, we obtain three kinds of results *in the main*. One, the informants are shrewd enough to guess and supply the answer *we expect*, and this sometimes puts us in a paradoxical situation ; such as that the citizens of the U.S.A. cling more to the “traditional” values than those of India (Hallen and Theodorson 1963). Two, because of the built-in checks in a properly-designed survey, we are often left with such a huge chunk of “contradictory opinion” that the data may not warrant any valid inference. Three, in the case of vital issues on which no opinion has yet crystallized in society, we frequently encounter a large incidence of “no opinion” and this forbids us from drawing any valid inference from the relatively few positive or negative answers (*vide*, opinion surveys conducted to ascertain even the incipient or rudimentary changes concerning issues like the motivation of people to family planning in India).

To be sure, such an outcome from “opinion surveys” lies in the nature of the social situation in India today. We are riding on contradictory waves. We have imbibed certain values in the first phase of our growth from our parents and grandparents ; faced a somewhat different set of values during adolescence and early adulthood through the media of books, lectures, and public



entertainment, and are confronted with still other kinds of "values" in the struggle for existence. So the different sets of stimuli lead us to think in one way, speak in another, and behave in a third way. ✓

For instance, tradition taught us that "acquisition of wealth" is not a status-symbol in society. Our current education points out that it is an important status-symbol, but it has to be earned honestly. And our later life brings home the truth that the above qualification, to say the least, is irrelevant. In such a situation, how can a battery of *direct* questions (however efficiently it may be engineered) bring out the reality?

Appositely, therefore, we shall have to enquire whether any objectively ascertainable change has taken place in our social organization from whatever is *assumed* to be its base. Of course, here again we shall be confronted with the problem of interpreting the "difference" recorded from the base as "causal change" or as "casual fluctuation". But we may cross that bridge when we come to it after detecting any significant variation between the base and the current situations. So our immediate attention is called upon to examine whether or not any "institutional" variation is found referring to the people of "industrial" and "non-industrial" locations.

This approach may require an essential support. Because if the society is in transition the time-lag between the formation of any set of new values and their execution in practice may be pretty large. So our range of observation should also take into account the "orientation" of the relevant people; the "orientation" being ascertained indirectly and not by direct questions on the issues. Thus, on this complimentary basis, we may evolve a scheme of sociological determinants for our purpose.

The scheme, it appears at the present state of our knowledge, should rest upon three fundamental pedestals of pre-"industrial" life in India which depict the principal characteristics of India's social organization and ideology. Namely :

- (1) The parochial outlook and behaviour of the people, as exemplified by their moorings to the "ancestral place of residence" or their primaeval attachment to the "native village", etc,

- (2) Their maintenance of the extended family organization or their orientation towards the extended family system in case they have not been able to form such a family organization for various extraneous reasons
- (3) Their adherence to the caste system in terms of its hierarchical distinctions, consequent stipulations, and the accompanying ideology.

There is all the more reason to examine these three facets of Indian life because from observation and experience they are frequently asserted to affect adversely the growth of an industrial settlement in respect of the organization and utilization of labour of all kinds and types in the locality (*vide*, Note 2 for instance).

## II

On an all-India scale, however, we have not enough data at hand to fit into such a scheme of sociological determinants or to analyse the situation as per the model proposed here. Even so, for illustrative purposes, I may present in the following a tentative analysis based on some facts we have collected for West Bengal. Because it may be the pointer towards more intensive and extended studies for the future.

In 1958 the Sociological Research Unit of the Indian Statistical Institute conducted a survey of the residents of Durgapur in West Bengal so as to obtain a preliminary idea of the people constituting the three townships of the Damodar Valley Corporation, West Bengal Coke Oven factory, and the Central Government's Steel Project. These three settlements have emerged in the area in sequence after 1950, strictly speaking, after 1955.<sup>3</sup> But in terms of forming an "industrial location" as a part and parcel of the planned programme for the economic development of India since 1950, the three townships may be considered together to represent that *type* where the "mechanized manufacturing" industry is the dominant note. For the over-all proportion of the investi-

gation-units<sup>4</sup> engaged in this sector of the national economy was 67 per cent out of the total of 1174

During 1960-61, the Sociological Research Unit conducted a sample survey in cities, towns and villages of West Bengal in connection with a study of changes in family structures in the State.<sup>5</sup> The survey showed that in the cities of Calcutta and Howrah 18 per cent of the sampled investigation-units (like those for Durgapur) earned their living from mechanized manufacturing industries, whereas for the sampled towns and villages the corresponding proportions were 1 per cent in either case. So that the "city" sample may duly represent that type of "industrial location" where the "mechanized manufacturing" sector of the national economy is an important but not the dominant constituent. The amalgamated "town and village" sample, on the other hand, would represent that type where the above is hardly a constituent at all.

Additionally, the "city" sample should represent the "not planned" characteristics of economic growth over a long period of years and so from that aspect, again, it may be distinguished from the Durgapur sample. The "town and village" sample, contrariwise, would represent the *base* situation in this respect for all practical purposes.

Out of the total number of "investigation-units" for each of the three derived samples, 2 per cent are found to have no occupation for Durgapur (Type 1 = highly industrial), 4 per cent for Calcutta and Howrah (Type 2 = partly industrial), and 3 per cent for the sampled towns and villages in West Bengal (Type 3 = non-industrial). Leaving them out of our present discussion in conformity with its title, we notice from Table 1 that the remaining units constitute "social groups" of successive orders of diversity and complexity in reference to the above three *types* of location.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, in terms of the *transmitted* and possibly acquired cultural differences, the three types of location may be arranged in a sequential order. And it could be hypothesized on that basis that the constituents of Type 1 would register a greater deflection from the "traditional" set-up in the social organization and ideology of the people of West Bengal as a whole than the Type 2, while the Type 3 would portray none or very little deflection in the same context. But to what extent is such a hypothesis substantiated?

Table 1

Categorization of investigation-units into "social groups" according to their				Number of investigation-units in different types of location		
Regional affiliation	Economic status	Religion & Caste grouping	Educational standard	1 Highly industrial	2 Partly industrial	3 Non-industrial
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Bengalee	White-collar workers & their equivalents	Caste Hindu	College	376	208	288
			School	24	54	268
			None	—	5	52
		Scheduled Caste	College	16	29	20
			School	—	25	30
			None	—	—	22
		Non-Hindu	College	3	23	22
			School	1	8	30
			None	—	3	22
	Manual workers & their equivalents	Caste Hindu	College	105	30	31
			School	158	140	353
			None	14	62	376
		Scheduled Caste	College	4	5	6
			School	21	44	132
			None	7	26	760
		Non-Hindu	College	—	3	6
			School	8	39	107
			None	2	15	474
Non-Bengalee	White-collar workers & their equivalents	Caste Hindu	College	40	12	4
			School	—	18	27
			None	—	3	3
		Scheduled Caste	College	6	2	2
			School	1	3	2
			None	—	7	2
		Non-Hindu	College	23	20	3
			School	—	8	—
			None	—	—	4
	Manual workers & their equivalents	Caste Hindu	College	7	5	14
			School	130	66	30
			None	36	51	60
		Scheduled Caste	College	3	—	—
			School	49	31	5
			None	41	81	33
		Non-Hindu	College	5	1	1
			School	59	39	10
			None	15	21	33
Total sample				1154	1087	3237

To be sure, the available data can provide us with only a glimpse of the situation, and that also not, always for the Type 1 as against the Types 2 and 3. Yet they may be of significant import. Because, pursuant to the basic sociological determinants suggested earlier, we can firstly examine for all the three types of location: (1) whether or not consistently more or less of their constituents have severed connection with their "place of ancestral residence" and have established themselves in the respective locations without past moorings; and (2) whether or not, in the same way, they have formed a not-extended family organisation as co-resident and commensal units in the respective locations (that is, a family-unit not involving the lineal and/or the affinal type of kinship relation among its constituent members).

We find, accordingly, that 77 per cent of the investigation-units for the Type 1 location maintain contact with their "permanent residence" elsewhere, while 46 and 70 per cents for the Types 2 and 3, respectively, maintain contact with their "ancestral place of residence". In reference to contact with their "ancestral" place of residence, the above figure for Type 1 may be an overestimate; for their "permanent" place of residence need not in all cases synchronize with their "ancestral" place of residence. Even so, the difference between 77 for type 1 and 46 for Type 2 remains extremely large, while the figure for Type 3 is 70. Therefore, it could be reasonably surmised that either the moorings of the people to their ancestral place of residence is not deflected by the typology of "locations" or the relative order of deflection is not consistent with the difference in the industrial character of such locations.

Briefly, the available information do not indicate a pattern of concomitant relations so as to portray the sociological characteristics of "industrial locations" from this aspect. And this corroborates our general observation on the seasonal migration to their ancestral or "permanent" place of residence of the persons categorized as "manual labour" as well as of an appreciable proportion of other persons residing in an "industrial location"; whether or not the "locations" are newly-found as Durgapur is or are in existence over a century like the industrial belt surrounding Calcutta (*vide*, the *Report* of the Royal Commission on Labour 1929, Das 1959, etc.).

As to the prevalence of the nuclear family organization as co-resident and commensal units, the situation is even more striking. Because out of all investigation-units in the respective types of location, the percentage living under nuclear family organisation was found to be 22 for Type 1, 35 for Type 2 and 57 for Type 3.

The difference in the corresponding proportions between the Types 1 and 2 could be accounted for by the preponderance of single-member units in the former (68% as against 35% in the latter) because of the lack of adequate housing facilities in Durgapur in 1958 when the steel township was still under construction and a large number of the investigation-units had to reside in temporary shelters. But the difference registered between the Types 2 and 3 cannot be explained that way. For, while only 10 per cent of the investigation-units in Type 3 lived by themselves alone (as against 35 per cent for Type 2), in the two respective locations the percentages living under the non-nuclear (= extended) family organization were found to be 33 and 30.

Moreover, we notice that a larger number of investigation-units in Type 2 were "oriented" towards the "joint family" organization than they were living under, whereas the corresponding difference for the Type 3 is virtually non-existent. Because when asked to enumerate who were their "family-members" (before ascertaining the composition of their co-resident and commensal kingroups), the investigation-units of the two locations enlisted such kinsfolk as would have formed the extended (non-nuclear) family organization in 49 per cent cases for Type 2 (with 30% *living* under the same family organization), while the corresponding proportions for Type 3 were 33 and 36 per cents.

The figures thus indicate that any deflection from the assumed "traditional" set-up in respect of the familial organization of the people is not even coincidental with the "industrial" and "non-industrial" stratification of society.

In regard to the organization and ideology of the people vis-a-vis the caste system of India (which has permeated into the non-Hindu communities as well—*vide*, Mukherjee 1957, for instance), data regarding the Type 1 location are not available. But with

respect to the "industrial" location of Type 2 and the "non-industrial" location of Type 3 we may examine the situation. For the Hindu investigation-units were asked to place themselves in the caste hierarchy according as they *reckon themselves* to belong to the topmost category (reserved in West Bengal for the Brahmins, Baidyas and Kayasthas) or to the category of *jalchal* (= "pure") castes or to the remaining category of *jalachal* (= "impure") castes. Correspondingly, the investigation-units belonging to the non-Hindu communities were asked to *group themselves* under three similar categories in respect of connubium and/or commensality with their topmost people; e.g., the Mughals, Pathans or the Saiyads within the Muslim community. And the upshot was that in reference to their statutory affiliation to respective "castes" 80 per cent of the investigation-units in Type 2 as against 87 per cent in Type 3 placed themselves in the same category as *traditionally ordained* for the Hindu castes or for the caste-like groupings among the non-Hindus.

A distinction, of course, is noticed between the two types of "location". So that it could be asserted that although in overwhelming majority the people of either location conform to caste-distinctions as strictly ordained for them, a relatively larger deflection is detected for the Type 2 than for Type 3. But would that contention be justified? Because when asked to categorize themselves as above, all the investigation-units were given three possibilities: (a) to equate to the traditional arrangement, (b) to differ from the traditional arrangement but to accept the *principle* of caste-hierarchy, or (c) to denounce the system altogether by refusing to categorize themselves. And we find that only 1 per cent of them for Type 2 and 2 per cent for Type 3 *refused to categorize themselves* in any way whatsoever.

On the other hand, the greater preponderance for the Hindus belonging to Type 2 to differ from the traditional caste-hierarchy but to accept the principle of the caste system (viz. 19% as against 11% for those in Type 3) is a phenomenon known to be associated with higher economic status and education. This has been underlined since the beginning of the present century, at any rate; irrespective of the urban and rural or industrial and non-industrial stratification of society (Mukherjee 1957). Therefore, in reference to

deflection from the traditional set-up *vis-a-vis* the caste system, the distinctions observed should be regarded as casual in the present context ; 99 and 98 per cent of the investigation-units in Types 2 and 3 signifying their acceptance of the principles of caste-distinction.

Of equal interest to note here is that inter-caste marriage was found to have occurred in only 18, 9 and 4 cases out of every 10,000 for the three types of location 1, 2 and 3, respectively. Possibly, the figures give somewhat an underestimate of the actual situation. Because the statements of the informants in this connection were not verified from further investigation. So if some of them preferred to conceal the incidence of inter-caste marriage in their "families", they could have done it successfully. But that, again, would point to the overpowering influence of the caste system to date. Also these proportions are found to be so insignificant by themselves that in spite of their satisfactory grading by the typology of "locations" and even if they were inflated ten-fold in order to counteract any possibility of underestimation, they would have merely substantiated the fact that the people still follow their caste principles as before and irrespective of their association with an "industrial" or "non-industrial" location.

We may also note in passing that as regards commensality between castes the laxity observed today is present equally in all the three types of location. Otherwise "tea-stalls" for all and sundry could not have thrived (as they do) even in the heart of the rural sector of West Bengal.

Furthermore, how conscious the people are of the other adjuncts of the caste system would be evident from the fact that 91 per cent of the investigation-units for Type 2 and 92 per cent of them for Type 3 were found to be distinctly aware of their respective *jat* (caste) occupations, although only 7 per cent of them for Type 2 could still pursue such occupations as against 19 per cent for Type 3. That is, while the economic system of society may not allow the majority of them to fall in line with another prescription of the caste system, and even when this is more marked in the "industrial" than in the "non-industrial" location, in both types of location the people are found enmeshed in caste ideology from this aspect as well



Table 2

Attributes	Percentage of total investigation-units (given under brackets) in the respective types of location			
	1 Highly industrial ( 1154 )	2 Partly industrial ( 1087 )	3 Non- industrial ( 3237 )	All types (5478 or 4324)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1. Maintaining contact with the ancestral place of residence*	77	46	70	66
2. Living under nuclear family organization	22	35	57	45
3. Living alone, without kin or affine	68	35	10	27
4. Living under extended family organization	10	30	33	28
5. Reporting such kinsfolk as "family members" as would have formed the <b>extended</b> family organization	(No data)	49	36	39
6. Placing themselves in the caste-hierarchy as traditionally ordained	(No data)	80	87	86
7. Refusing to place themselves in the caste-hierarchy	(No data)	1	2	2
8. Placing themselves in the caste-hierarchy differently from the traditional assignment**	(No data)	19	11	16
9. Distinctly reporting their <i>jat</i> occupations	(No data)	91	92	92
Evaluating their current occupations in respect of their <i>jat</i> (caste) occupations as :	10. Same 11. Equal 12. Higher 13. Lower	(No data) (No data) (No data) (No data)	7 15 23 46	19 32 13 28
				16 28 14 34

\*Refers to "permanent place of residence" for the Location type 1.

\*\*The proportions are based on the "Hindu" sample only.

In respect of awareness of *jat* occupations also care was taken to ascertain that it is not a casual affair in the life of the people. Because the informants were not asked directly as to whether they *know* what are their respective *jat* occupations, just as they were not confronted with direct questions as to whether they *think* in

terms of an extended family organisation or whether they *believe* in caste distinctions. Instead, they were asked to rate their current occupations in terms of their *jat* occupations as the same, equal, higher or lower in status than the latter; and it was found that less than 10 per cent of them in either of the two locations refused or failed to make that comparison, whatever may be the intrinsic worth of such a comparison.

In reference to all the available information (which are compiled in Table 2), the hypothesis made regarding deflection from the traditional *social* set-up by the typology of industrial location is therefore found untenable.

### III

The finding leads us to one of two alternative inferences :

- ✓(a) The structural alignments due to the exigencies of industrialization sponsor merely the adjustment and rationalization of the traditional social values, without effecting any qualitative change therefrom. ✓
- (b) Changes are taking place in some aspects of the life of the people and these, in turn, would affect their total perspective in life and living; but so far such changes are only incipient and restricted within some particular "social groups".

*Prima facie*, the first inference appears to hold good. For instance, ✓ it has been stated that 'when because of abject poverty the people from outlying areas are obliged to become "mill-hands", they first set up their habitation within or just outside the "industrial location" as single-member units or by forming the nuclear family organization. ✕ But, after attaining some amount of economic stability, they are frequently found to live in an extended family because their lineal and/or affinal relatives join them from their native places.' ✓

It has also been remarked that a Brahmin working in, say, the Bata Shoe Factory would not consider himself to have lost his caste, and his social *milieu* would agree with that standpoint. For he is not undergoing the "traditional" operations of a cobbler as a

handicraftsman ; on the contrary, he is working with "machines" and therefore beyond the jurisdiction of the economic organization postulated for the caste system.

Furthermore, one is reminded of the anecdote that when a famous person of Poona (the name being deliberately withheld here) was asked by the local Brahmins to state his defence on why he should not be out-casted for having taken tea with the Christian Missionaries, he retorted that there is caste-restriction regarding the acceptance of water but not concerning tea-drinking !

Such an attitude and behaviour of the people would conform to the adjustments and rationalization current in Indian society from age-old times. Thereby, the *janapadas* ("urban" centres in ancient India) also flowered up with the extended family organization of their inhabitants.<sup>8</sup> The non-conformist religious and social movements lapsed eventually into rigid conformism within the sphere of the persisting and all-pervasive social organization and ideology.<sup>9</sup> And, in the present, in the British, or in the Muslim period of India's history, even an orthodox Brahmin went on being acknowledged as following the prescribed way of life although he served a *mlechcha* for his living, dressed accordingly in the court or in the office, made due obeisance to the master, and also gladly received a "foreign" title in perpetuity when it was conferred on him for services rendered<sup>10</sup>

It would appear, therefore, that the "traditional" stream of life does not dry up, or even register ebb or tide, in reference to the economic or political changes in the country.

Yet evidences are there to indicate that opinion had generated in society in the past to break through the traditional social system. Notable in this respect is the Bhakti movement which swept over the whole of India at a time when Indian feudalism was at its normal decay (Mukherjee 1958 a . 182 ff). Also in Bengal since the last century poets like Iswar Chandra Gupta and Rabindra Nath Tagore, preachers like Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, novelists like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, and social reformers like Ram Mohan Roy and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar have been exhorting the people to be free from caste prejudices, parochialism and outmoded social customs and institutions. Do these have no effect in society ?

It is possible that lacking the proper soil in the past these ideas could not germinate or spread their roots. They, therefore, remained more in the nature of personal revolt of individuals instead of assuming the social character of group behaviour. But would not the economic growth and industrial development create the conditions for this course of social transformation? Furthermore, could not this course of social transformation be noticed more pronouncedly in specifically the "industrial" rather than in the "non-industrial" locations, as being essential adjuncts of the former?

We may, therefore, formulate the second hypothesis that instead of remaining as random phenomena in society, deflections from the traditional course of action and belief would now be crystallized in some "social groups", and although these groups may not be identified only or overwhelmingly in the "industrial" locations, the location type as "industrial" or "non-industrial" would be a significant factor in the composition of such "social groups".

This brings us to the second of the two alternative inferences we may draw from the previous course of examination of the available data. Accordingly, we may first choose those from the attributes discussed earlier which would precisely portray the situation under reference; and, thereafter, we may examine them with respect to all the available "social groups", as given in Table 1. So that, in this way, we may be able to detect any *trend* or *pattern* of change that may be yet rudimentary in society but perceptible all the same.

Within the limited field of available information, the following attributes would be found to pin-point the situation. Namely:

(1) The share of such investigation-units in each "social group" as maintain contact with their ancestral place of residence. Because that would give a relative measure of the extent of parochialism in respective groups.

(2) Similar proportions of investigation-units which are "oriented" towards (but not necessarily living under) the extended family organization. For these figures would give the best available measure of the relative hold of the joint family system on the respective "social groups".

(3) The percentage of investigation-units placing themselves in the caste-hierarchy of the Hindus (or the caste-like hierarchies

among the non-Hindus) just as traditionally ordained. Since this should give a fair indication of the intensity of belief in the principles of the caste system among respective "social groups".

(4) The proportions of investigation-units which are distinctly aware of their *jat* occupations. Because these figures should provide us with a measure of the persistence of caste ideology

All these attributes, however, refer strictly to the location types 2 ("partly industrial") and 3 ("non-industrial") only. So that, the "location type" as a factor of differentiation would apply to two situations only as "industrial" or not. Even so, within either of them, the other four factors of differentiation may be examined consistently *viz* (1) the regional grouping of the investigation-units as Bengalee and non-Bengalee, (2) their economic status ranking as "high"=white-collar workers and "low"=manual workers, including their corresponding equivalents enumerated earlier, (3) their religion/caste grouping as Caste Hindu, Scheduled Caste and non-Hindu, and (4) their educational distinction as college-educated, school-educated or uneducated

Therefore, it may be examined, first, whether all, some or none of these factors of differentiation have any relevance to the identification of deviant "social groups" in respect of the four attributes under reference; and whether the "location type" particularly is of any relevance in this context.

After that, if the result of the analysis would permit such a comparison, an analogous situation may be examined for the location type 1 ("highly industrial") in respect of two attributes corresponding (but not equating) to the first two of the above four attributes. Namely, (1) the share of investigation-units maintaining contact with their "permanent place of residence", and (2) similar proportions of investigation-units which lived under the extended family organization before coming to the "industrial area" under reference. Because this course of analysis also could take into account the other four factors of differentiation as applicable to the location types 2 and 3. And, therefore, any correspondence between the two sets of analysis may further support the conclusions drawn from the first set regarding some particular "social groups" as well as regarding some specific factors of differentiation in respect of deflection from the traditional set-up

The first set of analysis shows at once that there is no statistically significant inter-group differences for the attributes 3 and 4 ; *viz.* the two available to represent caste-behaviour and caste-ideology.<sup>11</sup> In respect of the institution of caste, therefore, we are not in a position to detect even a rudimentary pattern of change in the society at large.✓

For the other two attributes, on the other hand, statistically significant inter-group differences are recorded from the same course of analysis. That is, the possibility is there to detect deviant "social groups" in reference to parochialism (attribute 1) as well as orientation towards the extended family organization (attribute 2) in society.

Accordingly, we may classify the investigation-units in each "social group" in terms of their proportional representation under the four categories of all possible variations for the two attributes. Namely : ✓(1) those which maintain contact with their ancestral place of residence *and* register orientation towards the extended family organization ; ✓(2) those which do not maintain contact with their ancestral place of residence *but* register orientation towards the extended family organization ; ✓(3) those which maintain contact with their ancestral place of residence *but* do not register orientation towards the extended family organization ; and (4) those which *neither* maintain contact with their ancestral place of residence *nor* register orientation towards the extended family organization.

These categories, then, would present a spectrum of the course of deviation under reference. Because, along with the expression of the traditional outlook in one respect, the failure to maintain contact with the ancestral place of residence (*viz.* category 2) or, alternately, to register orientation towards the joint family organisation (*viz.* category 3) may be dictated by fortuitous reasons in case of some investigation-units, at any rate. Whereas, when an investigation-unit deviates from the traditional set-up on both the counts (category 4) or, alternately, adheres to it in the same way (category 1), the role of extraneous reasons in that context may be none or negligible.

Category 4, therefore, attains crucial importance in identifying the deviant "social groups" just as, complementarily, category 1

would in identifying the tradition-bound ones ; the categories 2 and 3 oscillating in-between. This is substantiated by the computed data in Tables 3 and 4, which present an interesting picture of differentiation among the "social groups".

Namely : (1) *clusters* of "social groups" (which with respect to each of the four categories of information are statistically homogeneous internally<sup>12</sup>) emerge in a number of instances for Category 4 as directly *out of* those for Category 1 ; the same being effected more confusedly for the categories 2 and 3 (Table 3). (2) The ranking of these clusters in terms of the percentage values of their constituent investigation-units indicates polarity between the Categories 1 and 4, with the other two categories oscillating in-between (Table 4). And lastly, (3) the clusters of "social groups" registering the sharpest and the next order of deviation from the traditional set-up are located in the "industrial" area (Table 4).

Table 3

Percentage of the investigation-units falling under each category of information formed by attributes 1 and 2 to their total numbers in each "social group" ; the categories referring to (1) the investigation-units' report of such kinsfolk as "family members" as would characterize their family-units according to (a), and (2) the maintenance of contact or not by the same investigation-units with their ancestral place of residence as specified under (b).

Formation of "social groups" according to the affiliation of the investigation-units to				Category 1		Category 2		Category 3		Category 4	
				(a) Exte- nded (b) Con- tact mai- ntained		(a) Exte- nded (b) Con- tact not maintai- ned		(a) Not- extended (b) Con- tact main- tained		(a) Not extended (b) Con- tact not maintai- ned	
1. Lo- cation	2. Re- gion	3. Edu- cation	4. Reli- gion/Caste	High	Low	5. Economic Status		High	Low	High	Low
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Partly indus- trial area (viz. Cal- cutta & How- rah)	Non- Ben- galee	None	Caste Hindu	37			6		45		12
			Scheduled Caste	15	44	*43	8	14	36	28	12
			Non-Hindu		29		0		38		33
	School	Caste Hindu		*56	53	5	6	22	29	17	12
			Scheduled Caste		42		19		26		13
			Non-Hindu	37	23	*38	18	25	36	0	23
	College	Caste Hindu		42	20	8	*40	25	20	25	20
			Scheduled Caste Non-Hindu	15		5		60		20	

Table 3—(Contd.)

				Category 1		Category 2		Category 3		Category 4		
Formation of "social groups" according to the affiliation of the investigation-units to				(a) Extended (b) Contact maintained		(a) Extended (b) Contact not maintained		(a) Not extended (b) Contact maintained		(a) Not extended (b) Contact not maintained		
1. Location	2. Region	3. Education	4. Religion/Caste	5. Economic Status								
				High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	
Ben-galee	None	Caste Hindu Scheduled Caste Non-Hindu		0	13	20	10	0	13	80	64	
					23		23		12		42	
					14		33		13		40	
	School	Caste Hindu Scheduled Caste Non-Hindu		26	20	44	27	7	17	23	36	
				20	18	28	27	20	23	32	32	
				38	10	50	26	0	26	12	38	
	College	Caste Hindu Scheduled Caste Non Hindu		17	10	41	47	16	0	26	43	
				17	0	35	60	17	20	31	20	
				9		13		22		*56		
	Non-industrial area (viz 4 towns & 21 villages)	None	Caste Hindu Scheduled Caste Non-Hindu			12	8		*37		43	
						12	18		18		52	
					0	*0	25	16	25	13	50	71
	School	Caste Hindu Scheduled Caste Non-Hindu		11	13	0	0	74	74	15	13	
					40	0		60		0		
					10	0		80		10		
	College	Caste Hindu Scheduled Caste Non-Hindu		0	35	0	0	100	50	0	14	
Ben-galee	None	Caste Hindu Scheduled Caste Non-Hindu		25	24	10	7	46	42	19	27	
				23	26	13	8	41	50	23	16	
				9	23	5	5	59	57	27	15	
	School	Caste Hindu Scheduled Caste Non-Hindu		35	35	12	12	39	36	14	17	
				17	31	*60	20	*10	35	13	14	
				30	33	3	4	60	50	7	13	
	College	Caste Hindu Scheduled Caste Non-Hindu		20	3	22	36	29	36	29	25	
				5	16	15	17	55	67	25	0	
				14	0	4	0	45	100	37	0	
	All combined				25		14		39		22	

[Notes : 1. Blank cells refer to "social groups" represented by 0-3 investigation-units.

2. Figures with asterisks indicate that they show significant difference within the cluster at the 5 per cent level of significance only.]



Table 4

Ranking of clusters of "social groups" found in Table 3 in terms of percentage values of the constituent investigation-units as calculated from Table 3 and shown in Table 5

				Category 1		Category 2		Category 3		Category 4	
Formation of "social groups" according to the affiliation of the investigation-units to				(a) Extended (b) Contact maintained	(a) Extended (b) Contact not maintained	(a) Not-extended (b) Contact maintained	(a) Not-extended (b) Contact not maintained				
1. Location	2 Region	3 Education	4. Religion/Caste	5 Economic status							
				High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Partly industrial area	Non-Bengalee	(any)	(any)	I		III		IV		IV	
	Bengalee	None	Caste Hindu Scheduled Caste Non-Hindu			I				I	
		School College	(any)	III				V		III	II
Non-Industrial area	Non-Bengalee	None	(any)			III					
	Bengalee	School College	(any)			IV		I		IV	
	Bengalee	None	Caste Hindu Scheduled Caste Non-Hindu	II		III		III		III	
						IV		II			
		School	Caste Hindu Scheduled Caste Non-Hindu	I		III		IV		IV	
						IV		II			
		College	Caste Hindu Scheduled Caste Non-Hindu	III		II		IV			
						III		II		III	
						IV					

To be sure, the deviant "social groups" (ranked as I or II for Category in 4 Table 4) are only 10 in number out of the total of 36 for the "industrial" area, and they account for only one-third of the total number of investigation-units under reference. Furthermore, Rank I of Category 4 accounts for only 2 "social groups" and 6 per cent of the total investigation-units, while Rank I of Category I representing the tradition-bound people refers to half the total number of "social groups" in the "industrial" area and one-third of the total number of investigation-units under reference.

But it is also seen from Table 4 that with respect to the "non-industrial" area, Rank I of Category 4 is absent and the next Rank II includes only 3 out of the total 11 "social groups" so ranked in all for this category of information. And it is further noticed that these 3 "social groups" account for only 4 per cent of the total investigation-units of the "non-industrial" area, whereas the other "social groups" corresponding to those ranked as I and II for the "industrial" area are ranked as IV for the "non-industrial" locality type.

That is, while tending to assume the "group-character", the relevant people are not found to effect yet a social transformation in reference to their residence in the "industrial" or the "non-industrial" area, as postulated for the first hypothesis in the present discussion. Nonetheless, it *seems* reasonable to surmise from the current course of analysis that industrial locations do have a role to play in the emergence of such attitude and behaviour as are *prima facie* against the traditional ones, although the role has not yet become crystallized and forceful.

The second hypothesis formulated in the preceding pages thus *appears* to hold good in contradistinction to the first.

## IV

The appearance, however, may be deceptive. Because the hypothesis would hold good only if it would be correct to interpret the above pattern of difference among the "social groups" as due to "value differentials" within the *milieu* and not as coincidental with the outcome of extraneous forces working therein. We are thus

confronted with the problem mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, namely, how far would it be correct to interpret the exhibited pattern of difference in attitude and behaviour as *causal change* and not as merely *casual fluctuation* in the context of the present discussion.

Causal change is a matter of interpretation based on the inevitable *inference* to be drawn on cause and effect from the *deductions* possible in course of an analysis of data. To what extent, therefore, the deduction possible from the the present course of analysis may lead to such an inevitable inference on causal relation between deflection from the traditional set-up and "value differential" of the deviant "social groups"?

It should be recalled that in terms of the institution of caste the pattern of difference is totally absent. So that in this respect even any relevant deduction is out of the question. The situation is of course different in the case of the other two attributes, *viz.* maintenance of contact with the ancestral place of residence and orientation towards the extended family organization. But there, again, it is immediately noticed from Table 4 that while a pattern of difference is an established fact, it is not fully consistent with respect to the five factors taken into account to represent the involuntary and voluntary groupings of the people.

Such as, their regional distinction is found to be the most important, with the clusters of deviant "social groups" found many more among the Bengalees than the non-Bengalees. But this may be due to the relative strength of the two samples. For a larger sample of the non-Bengalees might have obliterated this distinction, and that could have been effected particularly if this assorted group could be further distinguished in terms of the different ethnic units it contains.

On the other hand, while the educational distinction followed by the religion and caste-wise grouping of the people appear to be of greater importance than their economic status ranking (except for the clustering according to Category 4), the curious patches in the social mosaic which cannot be integrated further than what is seen from Table 4 emphasize the point that the Chinese puzzle has yet to be solved.

The immediate point of interest, therefore, is to find out whether the formation of these patches is governed by the ethnic, educational, religion-caste, occupational, "locality"-wise distinction among the people or by factors extaneous to the issue under reference. Because if the pattern of difference among the "social groups" could be explained by circumstances which are fortuitous in the context of "value difference", there would be hardly any room to seek for causal change thereto.

Apropos, Table 4 indicates that the clustering of "social groups" in terms of the second category of information tends to ally with those of the first category as against a similar relation between the third and the fourth categories, and that in no other combination between the four categories (*viz.* as 1 and 3, 2 and 4, etc.) such an alliance could be effected. That is, the course of distinction among the "social groups" is more in terms of familial orientation of the people than their attachment to the ancestral place of residence. But is it not possible that this is *sui generis* to the attributes under reference?

✓Because the ancestral residence of a person is *either* inherited and so it creates the *possibility* of maintaining contact with that place *or* that possibility also disappears when the ancestral residence is lost to him or her. But the orientation of the same person towards the extended family organization need not be influenced accordingly. So that the relative importance of the latter attribute to the former one may not reflect any value-differential within the *milieu* under reference.

✓On the other hand, if in respect of their current habitation some people are found to be so insecure and unstable as having no legal right on their residence and if, furthermore, they are found not to maintain contact with their ancestral place of residence, it could be hypothesized that they would be hardly in a position even to think in terms of an extended family organization. Whereas, if they did maintain contact with their ancestral residence, their orientation towards the extended or the not-extended family organization could be hypothesized as a random phenomenon. ✓

✓Contrariwise, if some people were found to live as "tenants" in their current residence while maintaining contact with their ances-

tral place of residence, the possibility would be there for them to think in terms of an extended family organization (whether or not they belong to that family type in terms of day to day living) because of their kin-members living in the ancestral house. Whereas, if such persons do not have any contact with the ancestral place of residence they may as well think in terms of a not-extended family organization according to the kingroup they are concerned with.

On the other hand, the inheritance of the current residence is likely to be closely associated with the maintenance of contact with the ancestral place as the expected stability and economic security of the relevant persons could easily afford such an association. Also in some cases, at any rate, the two may refer to the same residence. But in either of the two contexts the orientation towards the extended or the not-extended family organization may be a random phenomenon since the correlated impetus would not be there as having one foot elsewhere (*vide*, the persons who live as "tenants" in their current habitation).

However, even in this situation the joint incidence of no contact with the ancestral residence *and* lack of orientation towards the extended family organization may be exceedingly low because the stability and the pre-conditions to an inherited residence may induce the extended family organization among the coparceners. And similar is likely to be the situation in the case of personal acquisition of the current residence except that the maintenance or not of contact with the ancestral place of residence may now become a random phenomenon.

The above mental construct is, of course, based on *a priori* reasoning. But the available data also are not inconsistent with the pattern envisaged. Because if only those "social groups" are taken into account which express the essential characteristics of the respective categories of information by being composed of such investigation-units as are largely affiliated to that particular category (that is, Rank I "social groups" for Category I and Ranks I and II "social groups" for the other categories, as shown in Table 5), the assumed relative possibility for an investigation-unit to belong to one of the four categories of information in reference to their specific right on current residence is found to be clearly maintained (*vide*, class I "social groups" in Table 6).

Table 5

Ordering of the ranks of clusters of "social groups"	Weighted over-all percentage values of the investigation-units (number in brackets) constituting each rank for the respective categories of information as detailed in Tables 3 and 4.							
	Category 1		Category 2		Category 3		Category 4	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
I	(1279) 35	(713) 32	(90) 70	(67) 66				
II	(1706) 24	(319) 24	(687) 56	(430) 42				
III	(1311) 16	(2513) 11	(1210) 47	(1144) 28				
IV	—	(751) 4	(1461) 34	(2655) 15				
V	—	—	(848) 17	—				
All ranks	(4296) 25	(4296) <sup>c</sup> 14	(4296) 39	(4296) 22				

Table 6

Cluster of "social groups" expressing or failing to express the distinctive characteristics of respective categories of information according as their percentage values given in Table 5 are	Category of information	Number of investigation units	Percentage to the total number of investigation-units under each cluster of "social groups" for respective categories of information of those with the right on current residence in either locality type as			
			None	Tenancy	Inheritance	Personal acquisition
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Above average* (class I "social groups")	1	1279	12	29	47	12
	2	1032	14	57	18	11
	3	777	5	17	66	12
	4	497	30	61	4	5
Near or below average** (class II "social groups")	1	3017	11	28	47	14
	2	3264	11	19	56	14
	3	3519	12	31	43	14
	4	3799	9	24	52	15
All ranks for any category of information		4296	11	28	47	14
Assumed relative possibility for an investigation unit to belong to one of four categories of information according as its contact with the ancestral place of residence is .	Maintained	Category 1	Category 1	Category 1	Category 1	Category 1
		> 1	> 2	> 3	> 4	> 4
		<	>	<	<	<
		Category 3	Category 3	Category 3	Category 3	Category 3
	Not maintained	Category 2	Category 2	Category 2	Category 2	Category 2
		> 7	> 8	> 9	> 10	> 10
		<	<	>	>	>
		Category 4	Category 4	Category 4	Category 4	Category 4

\*Rank I for Category 1, Ranks I and II for Categories 2, 3 and 4

\*\*Ranks II and III for Category 1, Ranks III and IV for Categories 2 and 4, Ranks III, IV and V for Category 3.

If, on the other hand, the remaining "social groups" for the respective categories of information are brought under examination as a separate set, no such relation is indicated between the categories of information and the respective rights of the investigation-units on their current residence in either locality type as "partly industrial" or "non-industrial". Instead, the constituents of these "social groups" are found to conform, by and large, to the over-all proportionate distribution of all the investigation-units in terms of their right on current residence (*vide*, class II "social groups" in Table 6).

The construct, therefore, can be made use of as a guiding matrix in order to ascertain whether the pattern of difference found in Table 4 among the "social groups" can be explained as simply due to variations in the elementary conditions of life and living of their constituent investigation-units. Such as that their seemingly deflected attitude and behaviour from the traditional set-up are essentially governed by the facts like (a) they have no roots anywhere, that is, either in their ancestral place or in the locality they live in currently; (b) they have their roots in the ancestral place while in transit in the locality they live in currently as "tenants"; (c) they have roots in both the places through inheritance and/or personal acquisition of the current residence, or the two are identical to them.

Apropos, we get the following results.

(1) The Chi-square test applied to the distribution of the investigation-units under the above two classes of "social groups" (viz. as expressing or failing to express the distinctive characteristics of the respective categories of information) as well as their specific rights on current residence gives values significant at the 1 per cent level of significance in respect of all the categories of information except the first category which depicts complete conformity with the traditional set-up (Table 7). That is, while how they live in the "industrial" or the "non-industrial" locality is of no concern so long as the people conform to the traditional set-up (of thinking in terms of an extended family organization *and* maintaining contact with the ancestral place of residence), any deflection noticed from this arrangement is significantly associated with particular right of the deflected investigation-units on their current residence.

Table 7

The values of Chi-square obtained from the observed numbers of investigation-units and the corresponding numbers expected under random allocation for all the investigation-units in each of the 8 cells formed by (a) 4 classes of their right on current residence and (b) the 2 classes of "social groups", as shown in Table 6.

Category of information	Degrees of freedom	Value of Chi-square
(1)	(2)	(3)
1	7	2 8814
2	7	653.7577**
3	7	148 0157**
4	7	645 8578**

\*\*Significant at the 1 per cent probability level.

(2) The contributions to the total Chi-square values for the three possible instances of deflection from the traditional set-up are predominantly from those "social groups" which represent their essential characteristics, respectively ; that is, the class I "social groups" (Table 8) This substantiates further the point made above.

(3) Additionally, as seen from Table 8, the contributions to the total Chi-square values present distinct patterns for the respective categories of information, and thus confirm that in each case the specific nature of deflection from the traditional set-up can be explained satisfactorily in terms of the conditions of living of the people concerned. For in the case of Category 2 type of deflection (that is, orientation towards the extended family organization but absence of contact with the ancestral place of residence), the investigation-units living as tenants in their current residence account for two-thirds of the total Chi-square values. Whereas, in the case of Category 3 type of deflection (that is, lack of orientation towards the extended family organization but presence of contact with the ancestral place of residence), the investigation-units living currently in inherited residence account for half the total Chi-square values. And, lastly, in the case of Category 4 of maximum deflection (that is, neither orientation towards the extended family organization nor maintenance of contact with the ancestral place of residence), the investigation-units living as tenants in their current residence or as heirs thereof account for one-third of the total Chi-square value, respectively ; while, in a manner sharply unlike in the above two cases, the last third is contributed overwhelmingly by those who have no right on their current residence.



Table 8

Class of right of the investigation-units on their current residence	Percentage of the total value of Chi-square as contributed by each class of "social groups" expressing (Class I) or failing to express (Class II) the essential characteristics of a category of information as shown in Table 6								
	Category 2			Category 3			Category 4		
	I	II	Both classes	I	II	Both classes	I	II	Both classes
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
None	1	0	1	17	4	21	24	3	27
Tenancy	47	15	62	24	5	29	30	4	34
Inheritance	28	9	37	40	9	49	31	4	35
Personal acquisition	0	0	0	1	0	1	4	0	4
Any	76	24	100	82	18	100	89	11	100

Thus the Tables 6, 7 and 8 point out that the deviant "social groups" are associated with characteristic types of right on the current residence of their constituent investigation-units; and the merely on that basis the emergence of the pattern of difference given by Table 4 can be explained

## V

This deduction is further supported by the data available for the "highly industrial" area which were earmarked in a foregoing page for the second set of analysis in the light of the results obtained from the first set. To be sure, the second set of data is not identical with the first set discussed so far. But it is analogous in the sense that it specifies whether or not an investigation-unit lived in an extended family organization before coming over to the "highly industrial" area and whether or not that unit still maintains contact with the "family" in its "permanent residence". Because, in terms

of the mental construct applied to the first set of analysis (shown at the bottom of Table 6), two major hypotheses could be formulated with reference to the second set.

One, the pattern of difference among the "social groups" as found in the case of first set of analysis would hardly be present for the second set. Since virtually all the investigation-units in the "highly industrial" area live as "tenants" in their allotted residence, with the remaining few having no right at all on their current residence and certainly not of inheritance or of personal acquisition.

Two, the persons who maintain contact with their permanent residence would be found to have come more frequently from the extended than the not-extended type of family organization in terms of the assumption made earlier regarding the relative possibility of an investigation-unit to belong to one of the four categories of information in case its right on the current residence is that of tenancy. So that the constituents of the "social groups" available in the "highly industrial" area would be found to be consistently more heavily concentrated in Category 1 than in Category 3 for this course of analysis; these two categories being represented as "maintenance of contact as above and coming over from the extended family organization" (Category 1) and "maintenance of contact as above but coming over from the non-extended family organization" (Category 3). The remaining two categories for this course of analysis, on the other hand, would be represented by a random allocation of the investigation-units constituting the "social groups"; viz. "no contact with the permanent residence *but* coming over from the extended family organization" (Category 2) and "no contact as above *and* coming over from the not-extended family organization" (Category 4).

The available data support the above two hypotheses in as much as Table 9 shows that clustering of "social groups" in respect of any one of the four categories of information is hardly present and, most significantly, in respect of Category 4 (which presents the maximum deflection possible from the given traditional set-up) it is totally absent. Also, whatever clustering is there, it is merely in terms of the ethnic grouping of Bengalees and non-Bengalees. That is, even if there is any "value differential" in the "industrial" society under

Table 9

Percentage of the investigation-units falling under each category of information to their total numbers in each "social group", the categories referring to — (1) the investigation units' movement to the industrial location from an extended or a not-extended family organization as specified under (a), and (2) their maintenance of contact or not with that "family" in the "permanent" residence as specified under (b)

			Category 1		Category 2		Category 3		Category 4	
<p>“Social groups” in the “highly industrial” area in terms of affiliation of their constituent investigation-units to</p>			(a) Extended Contact (b)	(a) Extended Contact not (b) maintained	(a) Not Extended Contact (b)	(a) Not Extended Contact not (b) maintained	(a) Not Extended Contact (b)	(a) Not Extended Contact not (b)	(a) Not Extended Contact not (b) maintained	(a) Not Extended Contact not (b) maintained
1. Region	2 Education	3. Religion & Caste	4 Economic status							
			High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Non-Bengalee	None	Caste Hindu	50		5		31		14	
		Scheduled caste	24		10		44		22	
		Non-Hindu	27		13		40		20	
	School	Caste Hindu	56		3		36*		5	
		Scheduled caste	74*		8		10		8	
		Non-Hindu	49		8		24		9	
	College	Caste Hindu	78*	29	3	14	12	43	7	14
		Scheduled caste	83*		0		17		0	
		Non-Hindu	9	60	30*	0	13	40	48	0
Bengalee	None	Caste Hindu								
		Scheduled caste	36		21		29		14	
		Non-Hindu	28		29		14		29	
	School	Caste Hindu	38	31	12	19	21	38*	29	12
		Scheduled caste		33		14		29		24
		Non-Hindu		38		12		25		25
	College	Caste Hindu	27	57*	3*	7*	54*	23	16	13
		Scheduled caste	13	0	25	25	6	0	56*	75
		Non-Hindu								
All “social groups”			40		8		37		15	

Note — Explanations as for Table 3.

reference, it is not due to the "acquired" characteristics of the people living therein.

Furthermore, it is seen from Table 9 that while out of the 20 available "social groups" 9 present curiously high or low percentage values for one or two categories of information, they do not form a pattern or patterns even in terms of the "transmitted" characteristics of the Bengalee or non-Bengalee investigation-units, not to speak of their "acquired" characteristics in the "industrial location". On the other hand, Table 10 shows that ignoring such casual fluctuations as above, both the above hypotheses are distinctly maintained.

Table 10

Clusters of "social groups" found in Table 9	Weighted over-all percentage values of the investigation-units (number in brackets) constituting each cluster of "social groups" for respective categories of information as detailed in Table 9							
	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4				
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)				
1. All Clusters	(1140) 40	(1140) 3	(1140) 37	(1140) 15				
2. Excluding "social groups" with asterisk	(810) 29	(636) 11	(476) 26	(1101) 14				
3. Non-Bengalee cluster	(411) 52	(411) 7	(411) 30	Irrelevant				
4. Bengalee cluster	(729) 33	(729) 9	(729) 42	„				
5. Non-Bengalee cluster excluding "social groups" with asterisk	(186) 37	(388) 6	(281) 28	„				
6. Bengalee cluster excluding "social groups" with asterisk	(624) 29	(248) 19	(195) 22	„				

Moreover, we find that the difference noticed between the Bengalees is not a systematic phenomenon. For if out of the 18 "social groups" taken under consideration for their sample size above 6 (Table 11) 6 with asterisks are left out as expressing either very "high" or very "low" values regarding maintenance of contact of their constituent investigation-units with their permanent residence, the remaining 12 "social groups" belonging in equal numbers

Table 11

“Social groups” formed by the investigation-units living mainly as “tenants” in the “highly industrial” area according to their affiliation to				Total number of investigation units	Percentage of the total number of investigation - units whose contact with their permanent residence is	
Region	Education	Religion & caste	Economic status		Present	Absent
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Non-Bengalee	None	Caste Hindu	High	0		
			Low	36	81	19
		Scheduled Caste	High	0		
			Low	41	68	32
	School	Non-Hindu	High	0		
			Low	15	67	33
		Caste Hindu	High	0		
			Low	130	92*	8
		Scheduled Caste	High	1		
			Low	49	84	16
		Non-Hindu	High	0		
			Low	59	73	27
	College	Caste Hindu	High	40	90*	10
			Low	7	72	28
		Scheduled Caste	High	6		
			Low	3		
		Non-Hindu	High	23	22*	78
			Low	5		
Bengalee	None	Caste Hindu	High	0		
			Low	14	65	35
		Scheduled Caste	High	0		
			Low	7	42	58
	School	Non-Hindu	High	0		
			Low	2		
		Caste Hindu	High	24	59	41
			Low	158	69	31
		Scheduled Caste	High	0		
			Low	21	62	38
	College	Non-Hindu	High	1		
			Low	8	63	37
		Caste Hindu	High	376	81***	19
			Low	105	80***	20
		Scheduled Caste	High	16	19**	81
			Low	4		
	Non-Hindu	High	3			
		Low	0			
All social groups				1154	77	23

Notes —1. Social groups composed of 0-6 investigation-units are omitted from the table.

2. Extremely high values under col (6) are marked with one asterisk, extremely low values are marked with two asterisks; and the high values based on very large samples are marked with three asterisks.

to Bengalee or non-Bengalee ethnic groupings do not indicate any significant difference in reference to the corresponding proportions (Table 12).

**Table 12**

Results of the Chi-square test applied to the observed numbers of investigation-units in each "social group" of Table 11 as maintaining or not maintaining contact with their permanent residence and the corresponding expected numbers in terms of the over-all share of the two characteristics for all investigation-units and all "social groups"

"Social groups" of Table 11 brought under examination	Degrees of freedom	Value of $\chi^2$
(1)	(2)	(3)
1 All	17	116.7405**
2 Excluding those with asterisk	11	13.1332
3 Excluding those with single asterisk (giving very high values) and with double asterisks (giving very low values)	13	26.9428*

\*\* Significant at the 1 per cent probability level.

\* " " " " 5 " " " "

Furthermore, if instead of the above 6 deviant "social groups", only four with single or double asterisks are excluded from a similar analysis because they record extremely high or low values (3 of which belong to the non-Bengalee ethnic grouping), the difference observed among the 14 "social groups" in respect of maintenance of contact of their constituents with the permanent residence becomes significant only at the 5% probability level (Table 12). And concurrently we notice that the remaining 2 "social groups" (marked with triple asterisks and belonging to the Bengalee ethnic grouping) lead to a significant difference among the "social groups" in course of the present analysis mainly because they are constituted of very large numbers (one comprising the largest number for all "social groups") and not necessarily because they exhibit very high or very low values in comparison with those exhibited by the remaining 12 "social groups" (Table 11).

That is, the difference found among the "social groups" in respect of their maintenance of contact with the permanent residence appears to be a casual phenomenon, although apparently it takes the character of a difference between the Bengalees and the non-Bengalees. And this conclusion is substantiated from another observation, namely, the 6 deviant "social groups" (or these in batches of two as classified above by the number of asterisks) do not indicate any pattern or patterns like even the hazy outline of a pattern of difference noticed in Table 4 in connection with the investigation-units having different types of rights on their current residence.

On the other hand, from another aspect of examination of the data for this second set of analysis we find that not only the essential characteristics of the investigation-units is to maintain contact with their permanent residence (as was recorded in Table 2), but a significantly larger proportion of those who have come from the extended than from the not-extended family organization maintain that contact (Table 13). Even the scarcely noticed difference in the attitude and behaviour of the people living in a "highly industrial" area can thus be accounted for in terms of the mental construct drawn previously in reference to the elementary conditions of living of the people concerned

Table 13

Family organisation of the investigation units in the "highly industrial" area before emigration	Percentage of the investigation-units whose contact with the "family" in permanent residence is		
	Present	Absent	Either
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Extended	83	17	109
Not extended	71	29	100
Either	77	23	100

*Note* —The value of Chi-square in respect of the observed values in each of the above 4 cells and—the corresponding expected values in terms of the over-all situation is 23.6758 at 1 degree of freedom, that is, significant at the 1 per cent probability level.

Briefly, in the light of the available data, we are not in a position to state that "value differentials" within the society has yet taken a group-character; and that in this respect the characterization of the field as "industrial" or not is hardly of any relevance at all. The best conclusion that we may draw therefore is that the "sociology of industrial location" is yet in the stage of incubation.

#### IV

Even so, may we not draw a relation of cause and effect between the current state of affairs and it providing us with the subject-matter for "sociology of industrial location" at its present phase of incubation? For, as evident from the foregoing analysis bearing upon any sustained moorings of the people in one, another or both places, the deviant "social groups" (found more frequently in the "industrial" than in the "non-industrial" locations) are in a plastic stage. They have either no roots anywhere or their root in the ancestral place is not strong enough to hold them on to the social and economic organization there. Can they not, therefore, be moulded into a new type of being as progenitors of a new society?

So far history has ordained otherwise. From immemorial times Indian history has shown that people have moved into urban areas (pilgrim centres and such) where they could have shaken off the shackles of caste organization, live under nuclear family organization and so on. Because these were not vital adjuncts to the life they could organize in the urban areas, the *janapadas*. But they did not do so even in the handicraft-production and/or trading centres which began to emerge all over India at a rapid rate since the time of Akbar, the Mughal (Mukherjee 1958 a : 174 ff.).

Would they do so now? Alternatively, would they be completely atomized and turn into *hobos*? Or, in course of time, would they set up an extended family organization after the marriage of their children, and in other ways also slide back completely unto the fold of the traditional set-up?

This is the issue on which our attention may now be focussed in view of the fact that "value differentials" in society remain as



yet a sporadic and "personal" phenomenon whereas these people may represent the soft spots in the social organism through whom the desired values may penetrate in society and assume a group-character.

Apropos, we may note that the urban development of India in the past could not break through her rural impasse possibly because of the terribly static and harmonized society that was built up on the basis of the village community system as its fundamental economic organization, the caste system as its principal characteristic of social organization, and the doctrine of *karma* and the theory of reincarnation of souls as integrating the people in the ideological sphere (*ibid* 140-174). Indeed, the social system had thus become so inert, as stressed by authorities holding diametrically opposite views otherwise (*viz.* Marx 1853, 1953: 399-400, Max Weber 1947. III, 248-249, etc.), that invasion after invasion of successive hordes of people with different cultural make-up and economic background could not produce a fundamental transformation therein. On the contrary, they were either absorbed and integrated in the *milieu* (like the pathans and the Mughals) or the "conquerors superior" (the British) had to leave the scene after causing only a few dents on the surface of the social edifice.<sup>13</sup>

Yet it could be pointed out that movements towards a "new" society had developed in India at the last phase of her mediaeval period along with the growth of handicraft-production and trade centres which were ushering in modes of production and production-relations different from the prevailing ones. Such as, in the manufacturing and trading centres powerful guilds of the artisans and traders began to emerge, and a new relation of production (*viz dad-ney*) began to be important in these places, which was equivalent to the "putting-out" system or the *verlag* system in vogue in England and Germany, respectively, in the latter half of the sixteenth and the early seventeenth century (Mukherjee 1958 a. 236 ff). And strikingly enough, these movements were led largely by the artisans and traders living in the growing urban and manufacturing areas (*ibid* 189 ff).

No doubt, the guilds were organized mostly on a caste-basis. Also, although scanty, evidence are there to indicate that the artisans

and merchants also lived under the extended family organization like either the nobles or the peasants. Even so, there is also no doubt that these movements were directed against the caste system and many other petrified customs and institutions in the traditional society (*ibid* 182 ff.).—Hence the failure of these movements to effect a qualitative transformation in society becomes of topical interest to note. ~

For if it is due to some factors still beyond our comprehension, we should find them out. And, obviously, an “industrial” location would be the most suitable *field* for such an examination because the other causal factors of change assumed frequently, like urbanization and industrialization, are already present therein.

On the other hand, if the above failure is due to the fact that while pre-conditions for the social transformation were there its basis had not yet been laid in, that also could be best examined in an “industrial” location. For at the time we are speaking of, the organization of production was still on a caste basis, but this is no more so, formally at any rate. Also, unlike today, due to yet primitive mode of production and low productivity of the manufacturing enterprises, the pull of the rural society of subsistence production was overpowering against the commodity producing and trading centres. Additionally, the sphere of mobility in society was sharply circumscribed in those days; so that the people could not easily move into a manufacturing or trading centre even if they wished to.

Contrariwise, it can be reasonably assumed that the basis has now been laid for the desired course of transformation, and that it is being strengthened continuously. Can we not, therefore, mould the deviant “social groups” in the “industrial” locations into progenitors of a “new” society? If so, how can that be done?

Summarily, in reference to the two possible courses of inquiry outlined above, the question remains. What is the touch-stone to effect the desired course of social transformation, given that the deviant “social groups” in the industrial locations are the most suitable media for the purpose; that is, they represent the sought for *soft spots* in the social organism under examination?

This should be an important task for us—sociologists—to investigate if we wish to be socially useful to India at the moment.<sup>14</sup>

## NOTES

1. I am deeply indebted to my colleague Suraj Bandyopadhyay for his indispensable help in the analysis of data contained in this chapter.

2 To be sure, the process of adjustment in an "industrial" location may create problems irrelevant or unimportant otherwise. They may be classified under two categories. One, in reference to the productivity and efficiency of an industrial undertaking, the other, in reference to the living conditions of the people concerned therewith. And, either way, economic growth may be hampered. Such as, through regional parochialism, community or caste-wise distribution of economic favour, etc., as illustrative of the first set of problems; and because of the spread of drunkenness, extra-marital relations, contagious diseases, etc., as illustrative of the second set. But the former refers primarily to the industrial policy and the principles of management, the latter to social welfare measures and programme of social work. They need not, therefore, represent the "sociology of industrial location", — fundamentally at any rate, although on both counts sociologists may be called for to lay down the basis for human engineering or to supply the theoretical premises for a social welfare scheme or a plan of social work.

For there is no evidence to indicate that inter-group or intra-group tensions of the above and similar kinds have either annihilated a society by corroding its roots or have produced a new society with a different system of organization, orientation and ideology. Instead, important as they are, a correct diagnosis of the maladies and suitable measures to remove the pathological conditions can easily do away with such transitory phenomena, as has been found to be true for similar situations in Europe and the U.S.A. (for instance) in the first flush of their industrial development as well as later.

✓ On the other hand, while promoting economic growth thereby, such interventions also need not affect or influence *ipso facto* the

basic constitution of the society under reference. The social organism may still maintain its *status quo*.

Yet the structural configurations of "industrial" locations, as described above, are often brought into focus to *interpret* (not to represent) their specific sociological characteristics. Because it is generally believed that while the transmitted cultural differences of the "involuntary groupings" may hamper economic growth in the beginning, in course of economic progress the acquired cultural values of the "voluntary groups" would sweep away the archaic and traditional pattern of behaviour and ideology and thereby lead to the emergence of a new society. But that assumption may be fallacious, as noted above.

3. First, the D V C. settlement was established in order to maintain the barrage constructed according to the First Five Year Plan programme. Next, under the aegis of the Second Five Year Plan, the Coke Oven settlement grew up adjacent to the D.V.C's; and lastly under the same Plan, the Steel Project settlement was built at a little distance from the above two. Leaving aside the private contractors' employees from the last settlement (who lived there temporarily at the time of the inquiry for the construction work entrusted to their firms), the three settlements were found to have varying proportions of the "heads" of co-resident and commensal kingroups (-family-units) and corresponding single-member units earning their livelihood by working in mechanized manufacturing industries. Namely, 11 per cent for the D V.C. out of 97 as the total number of "heads" of family-units and single-member units. For the Coke Oven settlement, on the other hand, the corresponding percentage was 59 out of the total of 346 units, and for the Steel Project township it was 78 percent out of the total of 731 units. The three settlements could therefore be distinguished from one another also in this respect. But neither of the two need affect the trend of discussion contained in this chapter.

4 An investigation-unit refers to the "head" of a co-resident and commensal kingroup (-a family-unit) or to a person who was found living without any kin or affine (-a non-familial unit).

5. The study was sponsored by the Research Programmes Committee of the Planning Commission, Government of India. The

samples for the survey, drawn at random at two or three stages in a stratified random sample design, were 1134 for the two cities, 706 for the four sampled towns of Adra, Berhampore, Contai and Siliguri, and 2642 for the twenty-one sampled-villages.

6 Thus the Type 3 of "non-industrial location" is sharply distinguished from the other two types as essentially composed of : (1) Bengalees performing manual and sundry jobs as cultivators, daily wage-labourers, domestics, messengers, etc. (69%); (2) such persons as are largely uneducated (57%), and (3) all those religion/caste categories as represent the West Bengal society adequately, *viz.*, Caste-Hindus (47%), Scheduled Castes (31%), and Islam or other religious appellations (22%). The other two types of "industrial locations", on the other hand, are constituted of (1) a large chunk of non-Bengalees each (36% for Durgapur and 34% for "cities" as against 7% for the non-industrial location); (2) a large proportion of those Bengalees who earn their living as "white-collar" workers (*viz.* executives, clerks, etc.) or from equivalent jobs like, say, that of a doctor, teacher or lawyer (57% for Durgapur and 49% for "cities" as against 25% for the non-industrial location); (3) such person as are mostly educated (97% for Durgapur and 85% for "cities") and (4) those who mostly belong to the religion/caste category of the Caste Hindus (77% for Durgapur and 60% for "cities") Furthermore, it is seen that in the "highly industrial" location, *viz.* Durgapur, college-educated investigation-units are much more frequently found (50%) than in the "partly industrial" location of the "cities" (31%); and in the latter there are relatively more Scheduled Caste (23%) and non-Hindu (17%) units than in the former, *viz.* 13% and 10%, respectively.

7. Personal communication to the writer from Sri T. C. Das of Calcutta University in connection with his study of the workers at Birlapur in West Bengal.

8. This point is not commonly appreciated. It will be touched upon, again, at the end of this chapter.

9. Such as the various forms of the Bhakti movement which swept over India in the late mediaeval period of her history and *ultimately* gave rise to religious sects like the Baisnabs or Bauls of Bengal, Sikhs of Punjab, Kabir-panthis of U.P. and so on.

10. For example, the title *Khan* conferred on a Bengalee Brahmin by a Muslim ruler or the Knighthood "Sir" by the British like that of *Chakravarty* by a Hindu ruler in earlier times.

11. The "test of homogeneity of proportions" was applied to the data under each of the four selected attributes on the following considerations

1. Let a set of  $k$  "social groups" consist of  $(n_1, n_2, \dots, n_k)$  investigation-units, respectively; and let each of these investigation-units be classified as falling under one of the two possible categories of information obtained for an attribute (such as, maintenance *or* not of contact with the ancestral place of residence, orientation towards the extended *or* the not-extended family organization, and so on).
2. Now what is required is to test whether the proportional incidence of either of these of two categories of information over the  $k$  "social groups" can be considered as *homogeneous*; that is, as drawn from the same population. The null hypothesis, therefore, is that the probability of an investigation-unit to belong to any one category of information is equal to  $\pi$  for all the  $k$  "social groups".
3. Apropos, the hypothesis may be tested by either of the following two methods

(i) *Analysis of variance*

$$U = \left[ \sum_{i=1}^k n_i (\hat{p}_i - \bar{p})^2 / (k-1) \right] / \left[ \sum_{i=1}^k n_i \hat{p}_i (1 - \hat{p}_i) / \left( \sum_{i=1}^k n_i - k \right) \right]$$

where  $x_i$  = the total number of investigation-units of the  $i$ -th "social group" possessing the attribute;

$\hat{p}_i = x_i / n_i$ ; and

$$\bar{p} = \sum_{i=1}^k x_i / \sum_{i=1}^k n_i$$

The value of  $U$  may then be examined against the corresponding tabulated value of variance-ratio with  $(k-1)$  and

$$\left( \sum_{i=1}^k n_i - k \right) \text{ degrees}$$

degrees of freedom in order to ascertain whether at the desired level of significance (which was decided as the 1 per cent in this instance) the obtained value of variance-ratio ( $U$ ) would raise doubt as to the assumption of homogeneity of the proportions over the  $k$  "social groups". (cf. Armitage 1955 : 375-386 ; Cochran 1943 : 287-301 ; Gabriel 1963 : 1133-1157)

(ii) *Chi-square*

$$\chi^2 = \left( \sum_{i=1}^k x_i p_i - p \sum_{i=1}^k x_i \right) / p(1-p),$$

where the above notations remain the same as for the analysis of variance.

The value of Chi-square thus observed may then be examined against the corresponding tabulated value with  $(k-1)$  degrees of freedom so as to ascertain whether the proportions should not be considered as homogeneous. (Cramer 1954 : 445-449 ; Maxwell 1961 : 52-56).

12. In this instance, the alternate method of Chi-square (*vide*, Note 11) was applied in order to save time in computation. Because, in the previous analysis, both the methods yielded the same result

13. For instance, the *Caste Disabilities Removal Act XXI of 1850* which enforced that deprivation of one's caste would not henceforth imply forfeiture of his rights of property. Also similar Acts and Regulations, passed later in different parts of British India, were to make serious onslaughts on the sanctions of the caste system. The Queen's proclamation in 1858 that Indians "of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our services, the duties of which they may be qualified, by their education, ability, and integrity, duly to discharge" could strike at the root of the caste system. The disintegration of handicrafts industries

in the later half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries, and the gradual commercialization of agricultural products from its subsistence character since the latter half of the nineteenth century, could also strike a severe blow on the caste organization of the society and its joint family system. On the other hand, the facilities given to the production of a "Baboo Class" in the urban areas through westernized education, etc, could promote the introduction of new values in society from the second quarter of the nineteenth century. But all these measures have so far made only peripheral impression on the society at large. (*vide*, Mukherjee 1957 ; 1958 a : Chapters 5 and 6).

14. Otherwise, our role would be merely to play the second fiddle to the industrial management and the social workers in order to bring in "social harmony" within the existing framework (*vide*, Note 2). Or our casual pickings of "differences" within the *milieu* may very well further confuse the fundamental issue at stake.



## A Resume

The fallacies and the facts I have discussed in the last three chapters refer chiefly to West Bengal and a part of Bihar acknowledged to be less developed than the other regions of that State. So the comment would be appropriate: How can this collation be regarded as representative of India at large? But that argument could be countered by the rejoinder that even if the furnished data do not portray the over-all situation for India *en bloc*, they would, at any rate, high-light the composition to the social scene in reference to the "new values" assumed to be emerging in present-day India.

Because, while the selected region of Bihar (namely, the Giridih sub-division of the district of Hazaribagh) remained more or less away from the current of political, economic and social movements in India in the last two centuries, Bengal's role in these respects was keenly felt throughout the period. So much so that Gokhale once remarked: "What Bengal thinks today, India thinks tomorrow".

Needless to say, the veracity of Gokhale's statement for the past or for the present is not our concern. But we may reasonably adduce a hypothesis from the situation which led to such an observation that the emergence of "new values" in society is likely to be more apparent in Bengal than in India on an average, while the selected region of Bihar would be expected to present a picture of the least deflection from the "traditional values". That is, on account of their differential expectations to veer towards correspondingly extreme situations, the West Bengal and the Bihar data

should define a social scene which is likely to be *dimensionally* correct for India though it may lack in the sharpness of focus and in detecting minute details.

Pursuantly, the selection of specific areas in the absence of all-India data of the kind discussed in the preceding chapters need not affect the relevance of the deductions and inferences drawn therefrom, although there may be variation in degrees from one part of India to another in their respects. On this count, therefore, the discussion in the foregoing pages may maintain its all-India usefulness

However, the facts elucidated in the last two chapters do not represent any definite process of "social change" in reference to urbanization and industrialization of society ; the two factors (or media) usually regarded to be the most important contextually. So the questions arise (1) Does it mean that "social change" has taken to media other than urban and industrial development of society ? Or, (2) should we come to the conclusion that "social change" in India is an illusion for the present ?

The second question is obviously a premature one. Because the preceding pages have shown that while fallacious inferences on social change can readily follow from the facts we face, these facts need not point out that the society has encountered a "never changing natural destiny". Indeed, the last chapter has indicated that clues may be obtained towards social change provided we look into the organism in the correct perspective

Such clues, of course, may be obtained in greater or lesser numbers in respect of factors of change other than urbanization or industrialization. So that, at this stage of our knowledge, the first question also is superfluous.

Nevertheless, it would be useful to stress again that what is now required is not to run away with one or another assumption on the media or factors of social change, and thereafter go into intriguing discussions on relevant concepts and determinants thereto. Such as the concepts rural-urban dichotomy and rural-urban continuum in respect of urbanization and social transformation of India, or the determinants formulated in reference to the *social effect* of industrialization as "economic growth and the sociology of industrial location "

Contrariwise, in the light of an objective assessment of our *a priori* knowledge, we should formulate lines of inquiry with respect to any or a combination of prevailing assumptions on "social change", such as the one formulated at the end of the last chapter. Namely: "What is the touch-stone to effect the desired course of social transformation, given that the deviant 'social groups' in the industrial locations are the most suitable media for the purpose; that is, they represent the sought for *soft spots* in the social organism under examination".

For in the context of such logical formulations we may evolve working hypotheses, test them, evolve subsequent hypotheses in the light of the result of the tests, and thus proceed on an objective footing step by step (Mukherjee 1960). So that our quest for the appreciation of social change may eventually lead us to the *true* process in operation in Indian society to date.

Otherwise, we may merely indulge in playing around the vicious circle of "speculations and conjectures — loud thinking and bold assertions — sustained repetition of the assertions — ultimate establishment of the assertions as 'facts' that way". Or, our casual (and frequently fallacious) picking of "differences" within the *milieu* — whether they refer to social stratification of any kind or to inter-communicating "social groups" possible of being categorized in diverse ways according to the intention of a researcher — would only further confuse the fundamental issue at stake. Because they cannot but fall in line with the Sanskrit proverb "yādrśī bhāvanā yasya siddhiḥ bhavati tādrśī"; that is, "As your wishes are, so you will succeed" !

A distinction drawn at the outset between fallacies and facts — as has been cursorily illustrated in this part of the book — is thus an essential pre-condition to our undertaking the present course of research. And, thereafter, as has also been repeatedly underlined in the course of the last three chapters, our prime task becomes an objective evaluation of the *social facts* so as to formulate our lines of inquiry and to arrive at working hypotheses on relevant *soft spots* in the social organism through which the desired course of social change may be brought about in India today.

This is the proposal that I have endeavoured to place before my colleagues in this part of the book, with some documentation.



PART II

## FOCUS AND ORIENTATION



## *Focus on Social Organism*

### *AN ILLUSTRATIVE DIAGNOSIS OF SOFT SPOTS*

#### **I**

In the light of the conclusion drawn from the preceding part of this book, the first question that comes up for discussion is How to focus our attention on a social organism so as to identify its soft spots through which social change may be effected or expected to take place in due course. An inflexible directive, however, cannot be given on this point. Because the soft spots I have spoken of in the foregoing pages can attain a meaning only in the context of specific themes of investigation. Even so, an illustrative diagnosis of soft spots with reference to a specific social phenomenon would be useful in (a) demonstrating the relevance of such a detection, and (b) drawing therefrom certain general conclusions as how to focus one's attention on a social organism for the purpose of such a detection. The present chapter, therefore, will be devoted to this task.

For illustrative purposes, the task would be best undertaken by selecting a social phenomenon which would fulfil at least the following three considerations:

(1) It would refer to a situation which has an important bearing upon the social organism under examination. So that there would be a point in examining such a situation vis-a-vis the objective to

ascertain how "social change" may be effected or expected to take place within the organism.

(2) The situation would involve such a group of people as have already moved from one social scene to another and whose reactions to the already changed social scene (or to the alternate scene envisaged for them in the near future) are explicit and obvious. Because the successful working of any "action programme" would lie in developing it into a self-generating process in society, and for this purpose the previous knowledge or how a group of people have actually reacted to a changed situation would be particularly advantageous as indicating the soft spots in the organism under reference.

(3) The future course of life of these people, as predicted in terms of the diagnosis made of the soft spots in their present-day organization, can indicate within a reasonably short period of time the relevance and the usefulness of detecting these soft spots; or that relevance and usefulness may already be indicated by their present course of life and living. For that way we may quickly substantiate the two point (a) and (b) noted in the above paragraph.

Apropos, I shall discuss in this chapter the immediate past and the present course of life of the East Pakistan Hindu refugees found living in Calcutta in 1962, and their orientation towards the immediate future<sup>1</sup> Because the study would thus fulfil the above three considerations as follows :

(1) The "refugee problem" of India, of which the Calcutta refugees take a substantial share, is still a serious problem for the society at large; it having emerged since 1947 when the sub-continent of India was divided into India and Pakistan. Measures have been taken, once and again, to solve the problem. But with respect to the East Pakistan refugees, at any rate, it has not been solved yet. Instead, it has now assumed an all-India significance in reference to the social, economic and political wellbeing of the Republic, as is evident from the added interest shown in this regard from 1964 by the Central as well as several State Governments. And in Calcutta society the problem has taken the shape of a chronic ailment which tells upon the civic, economic, social and even



political life of the citizen ; as was particularly high-lighted during the communal disturbances of January 1964 when the city had to be handed over to the military authorities for a period.

(2) As a minority/marginal group in the society at large, the reactions of the "refugees living in Calcutta" to the changed and the presently changing situation are explicit. So that, as it will be seen from the following pages, a focus on variations within this group of refugees would provide us with significant clues to diagnose soft spots in their organization through which measures may be taken to solve their problem. For demonstrative purposes, therefore, the study of such a group in order to ascertain the soft spots in its organization would be useful to the implementation of a desired course of *induced change* in the society at large, which in India is the vital component of the planned programme for her social and economic development.

(3) The detection of relevant soft spots within the organization of the Calcutta refugees may indicate why even the large-scale governmental measures, like the Dandakaranya Project, are not providing a blanket solution to the problem. Also these soft spots may point out in the near future why certain measures undertaken by the public bodies have or have not proved successful. Such as, the recent measures adopted by the Corporation of Calcutta in order to "regularize" the land on which a large number of Calcutta refugees have built squatters' colonies ; the commendable attempt of the Bengal Refugee Service in 1964 to settle elsewhere the refugees squatting on the Sealdah railway station and its environs ; and so on.

Thus the present chapter will deal with a malady which has a very important bearing on the wellbeing of Calcutta society. And it will point to a diagnosis commensurate with the discussion in the first part of this book which can be verified within a reasonable span of time as correct or not in the light of the measures undertaken to bring about a "social change" in order to cure the malady. The illustrative diagnosis of soft spots in this chapter may therefore have a distinct usefulness in drawing certain general conclusions on how to focus one's attention on a social organism with a view to ascertain the course of social change taking place therein.

## II

I shall, however, deal with a part of the "part society"; namely, only those *self-acknowledged* refugees from East Pakistan as were found in Calcutta in 1962. But the limitation thus imposed on my field of observation need not affect the aim of the study. Because, on the one hand, the bulk of the East Pakistan refugees has come to West Bengal and the refugees who continue to live in the rural areas have been virtually assimilated in local societies, whereas of those "refugees" in towns and cities who still claim to be so designated the largest frequency is found for Calcutta.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the problems created by the displaced persons from Pakistan are the most vividly expressed in Calcutta; namely, as mentioned earlier, in terms of its social and economic setting, public health and sanitation, civic administration and facilities, and in other aspects of its corporate life.

The selection, therefore, need not be invidious. On the contrary, an examination of the process of assimilation of this group in the society at large would conform to the objective of writing this chapter.

Pursuantly, I shall not describe the life of these uprooted people in details. Instead, I shall discuss only some of their specific features so as to illustrate how intra-group variations may provide us with clues to diagnose soft spots in an organism through which measures may be taken to solve its problems. Apropos, we notice at the outset that the "refugees" in Calcutta may be categorized under four heads which would, schematically, represent four stages of assimilation of this group in the social *milieu*.

The first refers to the refugee families (52 in January 1962) squatting on the platform of one of the railway stations of the city (Sealdah) which is the terminal point of the transport link between East Pakistan and India. This segment of the refugees (who have "nothing to loose" in the literal sense of the term) will be labelled henceforth as the *platform sample*.

Under the second head falls those refugee families which had

built tiny hovels out of thrown away packing cases, tin sheets, etc., in the lawns and lanes adjoining or connecting the three main buildings of the railway station. Some 250 families were found to have thus settled down semi-permanently, with those occupying the front line of the settlements having opened stalls in front of their hovels to sell tea, tobacco, and such articles as the railway passengers may require on their way to and from the station. This segment of the refugees will be categorized as the hovel sample.

The third represents the displaced persons settled down in those swampy regions around the city where the normal citizen would not have moved in. There these people (nearly half of the total number of displaced families in the city) have moved mostly in groups representing their previous affiliation to particular districts (or even villages) in East Bengal, and have established "colonies" with distinct names for their identification. In these "colonies" they have erected huts, built roads, opened shops of all kinds, founded educational and recreational centres of their own, and some "colonies" have established colleges affiliated to the University of Calcutta. By and large, these displaced persons have thus built in Calcutta replicas of their previous settlements in East Bengal. Pursuant to their way of life in the city, this segment of the Calcutta refugees will be labelled as the colony sample.

Lastly, under the fourth head will fall the remaining refugee families (about half of their total number in the city) which have settled down in Calcutta among its other residents without making any distinction specific to themselves. That is, unlike the above three segments of displaced persons, this segment cannot be spotted on the map of Calcutta. Instead, just as before the cataclysm of 1947 it was necessary to interrogate person after person, family after family, to ascertain whether he/she/it was from East Bengal or West Bengal, so these persons can be identified as "displaced" only when they would declare as such within the social milieu. Hence as representing the "normal" process of contact and adjustment between the people of East and West Bengal in the city, this segment of the refugee families will be described as the city sample.

The four types of refugee families thus indicate, schematically, the process of assimilation of this minority/marginal group in society; schematically, because all these refugees need not have (and, in

fact, did not) pass through the four stages sequentially or at all. On the contrary, they point to distinct categories of displaced persons in terms of their life and living in East Bengal, the course of their migration into Calcutta, and the socio-economic organization they could build in the city

### III

Thus we find from a complete enumeration of the platform type and a sample survey of the other three types of Calcutta refugees<sup>3</sup> that virtually all of them lived previously in rural areas ; only 6 per cent of them (spread out in equal proportions among the 4 types) having emigrated from urban settlements. The life of these people before becoming refugees has, therefore, to be examined against the structural and functional alignments of village society in East Bengal which became East Pakistan since partition.

Pursuantly we should note that as is still true in a large measure for both India and Pakistan, rural life in those days centered round three principal dimensions of integration ; village, caste, and the joint family. The first obviously reflected the traditional attachment of the villagers to their ancestral homes. But this, evidently, provided a very weak defence against communal virus when the disease took epidemic form. For all the refugees declared that they had left East Pakistan because of communal disturbances.

The caste-wise integration reflected the concomitant relations developed through ages among various castes in a village. For example : just as the members of a "peasant" caste have to depend on those of the "priestly" caste for socio-religious and spiritual services, so have the latter ones on the former for food supply, etc. Similar relations, traditionally established, could be described among all castes. That is, the castes in a village formed a logically structured constellation in that society. Hence, when an external force affected the Hindu society in rural areas of East Bengal, it could have been expected that other factors remaining constant the caste-affiliation of the villagers would be a random variable in the

process of turning them into refugees. We find however that such was not the case with the Calcutta refugees.

To present the picture in terms of each and every caste to which the refugees belong would be extremely unwieldy, as there are too many castes to be taken into account. The castes, therefore, may be categorized into three groups which reflect their respective *social status* in rural society. Namely : (1) "high" castes, comprising the Brahmins, Kayasthas, and Vaidyas, (2) "middle" castes, comprising the "pure" castes from the members of which an orthodox Brahmin can take water and (3) "low" castes, comprising the "impure" castes from the members of which an orthodox Brahmin cannot take water. On that basis, we notice that : (1) the majority of Calcutta refugees belong to high castes, next to low castes, and the least to the middle castes ; and (2) this grading is not sharply disturbed in any one of their four segments, although the platform and the hovel groups represent nearly equal numbers of low and high caste Hindus (Table 1).

Table 1

Caste-wise grouping of the Calcutta refugees	Platform sample	Hovel sample	Colony sample	City sample	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
High	24	25	36	37	122
Middle	2	2	13	6	23
Low	26	27	4	5	62
Total	52	54	53	48	207

That is, the Calcutta refugees do not represent a random selection of the Hindu community either *en bloc* or by any one of its segments. Because, in that case, the low castes would have been predominantly represented in reference to their relative strength in the Hindu population of East Bengal, the middle castes would have been next represented, and the high castes would have been represented by a very small number.

The caste affiliation of the Calcutta refugees suggests, therefore, that a selective process was in operation among the Hindus in Bengal to turn them into displaced persons. The suggestion is further substantiated when we look into the third dimension of integration in the life of these people, viz. the joint family system. For it is almost universally accepted that the joint family organization inhibits mobility of its members. So it could be expected that the refugees would have been proportionately the least affiliated to the joint family organization in their home land, or, at any rate, their affiliation to joint or other types of family in East Bengal would have been registered as a random variable in terms of the familiar organization of all the villagers. Neither of the two, however, was found to be true.

The familial organization of the refugees previous to their displacement from ancestral homes could be described in great details. Broadly, however, we may take into account three family types, and the existence of some individuals as "non-familial units" (that is, living without any kin or affine) as a corollary to the familial organization of society.

The three family types are (1) nuclear, that is, formed by husband and wife, or parent(s) and/or their unmarried children, (2) patrilineal-patrivirilocal joint family, which is self-explanatory; and (3) such extended families of which all the members cannot trace patrilineal descent among themselves or do not follow the patrivirilocal norm of residence (as for example, the presence in a family-unit of a person related to any one therein as "sister's son", "widowed daughter" etc.). The third family type may be labelled as "joint family complex"; because although not subscribing rigorously to the rules of formation of the "normal" type of joint family for Bengal, it registers the inertia of the people to maintain the joint family system for reasons with which we may not be concerned here (Mukherjee 1962).

Now it is known that, before the partition, the East Bengal society was constituted by roughly 50 per cent of extended family-units, that is, joint family plus joint family complex (Pakrasi 1962b). But nearly three-fourth of the Calcutta refugees were found to have maintained an extended family organization prior to their displacement from East Pakistan, the proportion dropping to just above

50 per cent only in the case of the platform sample (Table 2). Here again, therefore, we find evidence of a selective process in operation to uproot the Hindus from their homelands and make them Calcutta refugees.

Table 2

Family organization in East Pakistan	Platform sample	Hovel sample	Colony sample	City sample	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Non-familial	1	—	—	—	1
Nuclear	24	13	11	9	57
Joint	20	30	28	21	99
Joint Complex	7	11	14	18	50
Total	52	54	53	48	207
Extended = Joint + Joint Complex	27	41	42	39	149

Either way, however, the process of selection is not explained. They merely substantiate the fact that the "external force" did not affect the rural society indiscriminately or in the light of assumed differential mooring of the types of familial organisation of the people. Nevertheless, they point concurrently to an economic motivation in the destructive role of communal tension in undivided India, which has been noted by many social scientists and politicians since 1940-s. And this leads us, eventually, to appreciate how the process of selection was at work in East Pakistan society in order to turn particular segments of Hindu villagers into refugees, as reflecting different ways of life and living therein.

Because the above structural alignment of the Calcutta refugees in reference to their life in East Bengal indicates that a high position in the social ladder is positively associated with the propensity to maintain a joint family organization; an association which is generally known and accepted. This association, of course, does not suggest that the low-caste people are averse to forming joint families. On the contrary, in the light of the evidence available

from Bengal villages (now in Pakistan) during 1941-45 as well as from West Bengal even today, we may be persuaded to infer logically that the desire to form joint family organization prevailed in the minds of all villagers irrespective of their caste-affiliation (*vide*, Mukherjee 1958 b : 175-176; Chapter 2 of this book; &c). Moreover, this inference would be substantiated in a following page of this chapter.

However, we may accept that, as found for the East Pakistan villages in an earlier period, it is the economic affluence of the people that decided their formation of joint families, and this was associated with the social status of the people because of the positive correlation found between the social and economic structures of Bengal society (Mukherjee 1957, 1958 b, 1961 b )

This conclusion is also indicated by the association found between the social and economic status of the Calcutta refugees and their maintenance of the extended family organization prior to being displaced from East Pakistan (Table 3).

Table 3

Caste-wise groupings of Calcutta refugees	Family organization and Economic affiliation of the refugee-units in East Pakistan				
	Extended family		Not-extended family		Total
	High* economic status	Low** economic status	High* economic status	Low** economic status	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
High *	56	32	19	15	122
Middle	5	14	2	2	23
Low	15	27	4	16	62
Total	76	73	25	33	207

\* Source of livelihood as high-grade service-holders and professionals, whole-sale merchants, rent receivers from land owned.

\*\* " " " " " peasants, craftsmen, petty shopkeepers and pedlars, low-grade service-holders and professionals (like porter, domestic servant, medicine-man, &c), and beggar.



To understand the selective process, therefore, the economic organization of these people before becoming refugees should be looked into. And we notice, accordingly, that the factor which is of pointed relevance to the examination of Calcutta refugees in the light of the selective process at work to displace them from their homelands refers to the sectors of the rural economy to which their respective segments were then connected

For the refugees now belonging to the platform and the hovel samples were mainly peasants, artisans catering to the immediate needs of the rural folk, petty shopkeepers, pedlars, and wage-earners doing sundry jobs for the villagers (Table 4). To them, town-life was a foreign entity, Calcutta a mental image. Because their horizon was circumscribed by the villages they lived in and the immediate rural neighbourhood

Contrariwise, the majority of the colony and the city samples were not unfamiliar with the urban way of life; and most of them had direct contact with the urban economy, some directly with Calcutta. For they used to earn their livelihood as engaged in relatively high-grade professions and services or as landowners and wholesale merchants (Table 4).

Table 4

Source of livelihood of Calcutta refugees before leaving East Pakistan	Platform sample	Hovel sample	Colony sample	City sample	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
High-grade service or profession	4	8	22	16	50
Wholesale trade	1	—	10	12	23
Rent from land	2	3	15	8	28
Economic affiliation—High	7	11	47	36	101
Cultivation	16	20	—	1	37
Shop-keeping or pedling	22	19	4	8	53
Craft	3	3	2	3	11
Low-grade service or profession	2	1	—	—	3
Charity	2	—	—	—	2
Economic affiliation—Low	45	43	6	12	106
Total	52	54	53	48	207

Participating in wholesale trade in jute or cotton textiles, they had developed their contacts with the large towns in East Bengal or also with Calcutta, the centres of such trade organizations. Or, posted in rural areas as local functionaries of the government and private organizations, they maintained contacts with their headquarters in towns or in the metropolis. Similarly, as medical men, school teachers, etc., they were not unfamiliar with the social and economic organization of urban areas or of the city of Calcutta. And as landowners, while they lived on the rent they received from the land they owned, they spent at least a part of their wealth to maintain social contact with urban areas and to enjoy the amenities of town or city life. Their horizon, therefore, was far more extended than that of the former group, as they could and did maintain contact with the urban organization of society and even with Calcutta through their sources of livelihood.

Obviously, for reasons noted above, in comparison with the former the latter group of people could belong relatively more to the high castes and the next to middle castes, and they could also maintain the extended family organization much more frequently. So we notice that the bulk of the refugees in the city and the colony samples are from high castes, and the next from the middle castes, whereas a little more than half of the platform and the hovel samples are constituted of low-caste Hindus, with the members of high castes following them closely and the middle castes being virtually unrepresented (Table 3).

We also find that the extended family organization was the most marked for the city sample, next for the colony sample, then for the hovel sample, and lastly for the platform sample, with the relative proportions of the "joint family complex" successively less from the city to the platform sample (Table 4). The relative proportions of occurrence of the joint family complex type in the city, colony, hovel and platform samples thus agree with the relative prosperity of these people in their homeland whereby they maintained such persons in the family as are not prescribed by the "norm" of the patrilineal-patrilocal joint family system.

Hence, in the context of the present study, the fact that the constituents of the "city-colony" samples would represent the extended family organization in East Bengal much more frequently

than the "platform-hovel" samples is as obvious as that the former represent more high and middle caste people than the latter. And what follows therefrom is that the concept of rural *elite* and the mass would be particularly relevant to describe the life of these people before becoming refugees.

Therefore, bearing in mind this dichotomy of the displaced persons in reference to their life in East Pakistan and translating it into the "city-colony" samples, on one side, and the "platform-hovel" samples, on the other, we may proceed to examine their process of displacement from homeland and what followed thereafter.

#### IV

Out of 207 refugee-units in our sample, 101 came directly to Calcutta ; the rest tried to settle down, at first, in the rural areas of West Bengal or other States in India. Here, thus, we find how the life of these people in their homeland influenced them to undertake different courses of migration for security, shelter and self-preservation. Because nine-tenths of the units in the city and the colony samples were found to have migrated directly to Calcutta, while only one-tenth of the platform and the hovel samples did the same. Evidently, the rural elite (composing mainly the city and the colony samples) could make use of their previous way of life even when uprooted from their homeland.

For 16 per cent of the "heads" of refugee-units which migrated directly to Calcutta declared that they came to the city on "official transfer" or because their relatives lived there or for the education of their children. And, while 31 per cent of them stated that they could not think of any other destination and so chose Calcutta, another 53 per cent chose this place to secure jobs or to start small-scale manufacturing or commercial enterprise.

As to the former group of migrants, their utilization of the contacts they had with Calcutta is thus directly indicated. The later group, on the other hand, may appear to have moved in void, whatever great hopes they may have had of setting up a career in

Calcutta. But that their aspirations in this respect were fulfilled to a large extent is seen from the fact that while none of the constituents of the city and colony samples could maintain a living in Calcutta as landowner (and a number turned into craftsmen), most of them did not go down the economic ladder by settling down in the city (Table 5).

Table 5

Source of livelihood of the Calcutta refugees in their homeland and after displacement	Refugee-units migrating directly to Calcutta					
	City sample		Colony sample		City-Colony samples	
	While in East Pakistan	In Calcutta	While in East Pakistan	In Calcutta	While in East Pakistan	In Calcutta
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
High-grade service or profession	15	24	19	29	34	53
Wholesale trade	10	8	9	11	19	19
Rent from land	8	—	14	—	22	—
Economic affiliation—High	33	32	42	40	75	72
Cultivation	1	—	—	—	1	—
Shopkeeping or pedling	6	—	4	1	10	1
Craft	3	10	2	7	5	17
Low-grade service or profession	—	—	—	—	—	—
Charity	—	1	—	—	—	1
Economic affiliation—Low	10	11	6	8	16	19
Total	43	43	48	48	91	91

That is, although out of those who came directly to Calcutta more than three-fourths declared that they had no alternative to settling down in this city or came here to earn their livelihood, they certainly had a definite orientation towards how they were going

to set themselves up and managed it reasonably well. Contextually, their affiliation to the city and the colony samples and the associated economic background in East Pakistan are worthy of note. Because even those of the city-colony samples who first went to settle outside Calcutta, and later come to the city, did not suffer greatly from economic disintegration in the process (Table 6).

Table 6

Source of livelihood of the Calcutta refugee in their homeland and after displacement	Refugee-units migrating ultimately to Calcutta					
	City sample			Colony sample		
	While in East Pakistan	In India		While in East Pakistan	In India	
		At the last settlement	Calcutta		At the last settlement	Calcutta
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
High-grade service or profession	1	1	2	3	3	3
Wholesale trade	2	1	1	1	1	1
Rent from land	—	—	—	1	1	—
Economic affiliation—High	3	2	3	5	5	4
Cultivation	—	—	—	—	—	—
Shopkeeping or pedling	2	3	2	—	—	—
Craft	—	—	—	—	—	1
Low-grade service or profession	—	—	—	—	—	—
Charity	—	—	—	—	—	—
Economic affiliation—Low	2	3	2	—	—	1
Total	5	5	5	5	5	5

The bulk of the platform and the hovel samples, on the other hand, could not have any such orientation or possibilities to settle down in Calcutta. These people, therefore, went to rural areas in or outside West Bengal and tried to grow roots there in conformity with their previous way of life; although an appreciable

number of them could no more remain as sons of the soil. This is evident from their sources of livelihood at the places where they settled down after leaving Pakistan and before coming to Calcutta (Table 7).

Table 7

Sources of livelihood of the Calcutta refugees in their homeland and after their displacement	Refugee-units migrating in the first instance to places in India other than the city Calcutta					
	Platform sample		Hovel sample		Platform-Hovel sample	
	At the last		At the last		At the last	
	While in East Pakistan	settle-ment in India	While in East Pakistan	settle-ment in India	While in East Pakistan	settle-ment in India
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
High-grade service or profession	3	1	7	6	10	7
Wholesale trade	1	1	—	—	1	1
Rent from land	2	—	3	—	5	—
Economic affiliation—High	6	2	10	6	16	8
Cultivation	14	7	20	10	34	17
Shopkeeping or pedling	20	23	17	17	37	40
Craft	3	3	2	2	5	5
Low-grade service or profession	1	4	—	8	1	12
Charity	2	7	—	6	2	13
Economic affiliation—Low	40	44	39	43	79	87
Total	46	46	49	49	95	95

Interestingly, the constituents of the hovel sample stayed mostly in West Bengal while those of the platform sample went largely out of that State (67% as against 2% of the former). ✓ But, irrespective of such differences in the course of life they were trying to build up on Indian soil, that very life was out short by causes beyond their control ✓ Mainly because of what they described as “economic failure” and “natural calamity” (like severe flood), 86 percent of the refugee-units settled in rural areas of West Bengal had to be on the move again; leaving behind them the ruins of their spontaneous initiative and hard labour. And, now, finding no other possibility to make a living, they came to Calcutta.

✓ It appears that “economics” did not play the major role in uprooting those displaced persons who had settled outside West

Bengal For 76 per cent of these refugee-units declared that the displeasure they created by settling among non-Bengalees was the main cause for their failure to grow roots in the newly-found homelands. However, they also had to take to the road again and come down to Calcutta as the last resort for their survival.

Although the end product was thus the same in both cases, the specific reasons why the constituents of the platform and the hovel samples could not strike root on Indian territory at the first instance appear to be different and without any reference to their previous way of life. The difference, however, is superficial.

In the case of those who settled in rural areas of West Bengal the reason is of course obvious, namely, the failure of West Bengal's rural economy to absorb these people in the light of its present-day potentials, as has been referred in a Government report<sup>1</sup> Where, however, the Bengalee refugees had settled among non-Bengalee people, mainly in Eastern India, the "social" factor instead of the economic potential of these rural areas appears to have wrecked the process of rehabilitation. But this "social" factor denotes primarily the limitations of the "economic" situation prevailing in those localities. Namely, the local people are handicapped in the economic organization of society in view of the influx of a large number of immigrants taking their place within the same organization.

This was also implied in the official report mentioned above. So that the "social" scene emerged largely out of the "economic" situation, the tension between nationalities, existing in India for a long time, having a hand to bring about the catastrophe and thus *prima facie* becoming the lever to upset the apple-cart.

Briefly, in their attempt to settle down in India, the constituents of the platform and the hovel samples failed to reckon with the unfortunate fact that India's rural economy cannot absorb them within its traditional set-up. For the constituents of the city and the colony samples, on the other hand, such a question did not arise; as in terms of their previous background they could settle down within the confines of an urban economy.

The economic background of the respective segments of Calcutta refugees is thus seen to have played the primary role in their first

attempt to settle down in India. And we notice further that the unfortunate consequence thereof had its repercussions on the social organization. This would be realized from an examination of the changes in the familial organization of these people because that was the only facet of their social organization which they could carry with them when leaving its all other facets (like the respective caste-constellations in the villages, etc.), with their hearths and homes in East Pakistan.

The first casualty in this respect was, of course, the type of family labelled as the "joint family complex". This is noticed for all the four segments of Calcutta refugees, evidently because when the crisis came the "heads" of the refugee-units sacrificed first those constituents of their units which led to the formation of the "not-normal" type of family composition (Tables 8 and 9). Therefore, excluding this family type from our discussion, we find that even when on the move a very large number of refugee-units in the city and the colony samples could maintain their joint family organization if that was the type of family they belonged to while in East Bengal (Table 8). Contrariwise, although a very large proportion of those in the hovel sample maintained the joint family organization while in East Bengal, they migrated largely as nuclear units (in an appreciable proportion only as husband and wife). And the same process of disintegration of family organization while on the move is found to be more marked among those belonging to the platform sample (Table 9).

Table 8

Family organization of the Calcutta refugees	City sample			Colony sample		
	While in Pakistan	While on the move	In Calcutta	While in Pakistan	While on the move	In Calcutta
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Non-familial	—	8	1	—	3	1
Nuclear (husband & wife)	—	2	—	—	4	2
Nuclear (other forms)	9	17	18	11	25	28
Joint	21	15	25	28	20	21
Joint complex	18	6	4	14	1	1
Total	48	48	48	53	53	53
All nuclear	9	19	18	11	29	30
All extended	39	21	29	42	21	22



Table 9

Family organization of the Calcutta refugees	Platform sample		Hovel sample			
	While in Pakistan	While on the move	In Calcutta	While in Pakistan	While on the move	In Calcutta
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Non-familial	1	1	2	—	—	1
Nuclear (husband & wife)	3	8	2	1	6	1
Nuclear (other forms)	21	30	41	12	23	32
Joint	20	9	4	30	17	13
Joint complex	7	4	3	11	8	7
Total	52	52	52	54	54	54
All nuclear	24	38	43	13	29	33
All extended	27	13	7	41	25	20

Further we notice that while the constituents of the city and the colony samples largely resumed to live under joint family organization (particularly marked in the city sample), the process of disintegration went on among the constituents of the platform and the hovel samples during their wanderings prior to arriving in Calcutta ; this being very strongly underlined for the platform sample (Tables 8 and 9).

The primary unit of social organization was thus being atomized successively among the refugees belonging to the platform and the hovel samples, while it was shaping back to "normal" among those in the colony and the city samples. This confirms the previously-made assertion that in this sub-continent the people revive (or, at any rate, try to revive) their traditional organization of joint family provided the proper climate is there in terms of fulfilling the minimum of its pre-conditions like a reasonably permanent and habitable shelter, at least the lowest level of such an income that can satisfy the desire, etc. ✓

More will be said later about how relatively congenial circumstances allowed the members of the colony and the city samples to revive their previous social organization in other aspects as well after settling down permanently in Calcutta ; and how such possibilities were not available to the members of the platform and the hovel samples in the metropolis. For the present, we may note that in the intervening years after becoming refugees those belonging to the city and the colony samples could pursue or resume

✓their previous way of life both in its economic and social aspects ; while for those belonging to the platform and the hovel samples, the economic life was again disturbed and their social organization disintegrated. ✓

Moreover, during this period the constituents of the city-colony and the platform-hovel segments of Calcutta refugees underwent specific types of experience, leading to their further distinction into the four segments found in Calcutta at the time of investigation

Thus a detailed scrutiny of the information collected from the refugee-units showed that those in the city-colony samples who had no concern with the agrarian economy left Pakistan within three years of the "partition", and they came directly to Calcutta. The remaining component of this social stratum, viz. the landowners, also came directly to Calcutta, but evidently because of their economic roots in Pakistan they were more reluctant to leave. Many of them, therefore, left Pakistan between three and five years after the "partition".

On the whole, nearly three-fourths of the city-colony samples left East Pakistan within five years of its formation, and two-thirds came to Calcutta in the same period. Adding another five years, that is, within ten years of "partition" of the sub-continent, 95 per cent of those belonging to these two samples are seen to have left East Pakistan and 89 per cent to have come to Calcutta.

The constituents of the platform-hovel samples appear to have been more reluctant to leave East Bengal, as they were rooted to the soil. So we find that in the first five years after the "partition" only a little more than half of them had left their homeland, and an appreciable number (16% as against 5% for the city-colony sample) left Pakistan even after ten years of its formation.

And, as noted before, ✓in India they first tried to rehabilitate themselves by settling down with agriculture or ancillary activities in rural areas of West Bengal, Assam, or other States. ✓ Only when that avenue of making a living failed and they faced "no other alternative" ✓(as they stated to our investigators), they came in bulk (75% of them) to Calcutta within the last five years before our date of investigation as their last resort for survival.

This varying course of migration of the displaced persons, reflecting their degree of inertia to the life they were leading in

East Bengal and the relative order of difficulties they encountered in the process of rehabilitation in India, had a significant bearing on their nature of settlement in Calcutta

Those functioning in East Bengal villages as agents or employees of mercantile organizations or the government had the least strong roots in the local societies. So for them to decide to leave Pakistan immediately after the violent shake-up of the country in 1947 was fairly easy. Also for an appreciable number of them to be transferred to their "business" headquarters in Calcutta or to resume similar activities there as they were doing in East Bengal was not a difficult task because of the previous contacts they had in Calcutta through business associates, friends and relatives. And for the same reason, a large number of them could settle down directly *within the social milieu*.

Interestingly, therefore, we notice that the city sample gives proportionately a smaller representation of the previous "land-owners" in East Bengal than the colony sample, and, relatively, more of the constituents of the colony sample have gone down the economic ladder than of the city sample (Tables 5 and 6).

We notice further that while ultimately the refugee-units belonging to the city and the colony samples maintained their familial organization as it was in East Pakistan, most of their constituents did not move out at a time but in successive phases. And this course of migration was more marked for the city than for the colony sample (Table 10). Evidently, the members of both the segments—and more of those belonging to the city sample—made use of their contacts existing in Calcutta from earlier times and gradually entrenched themselves in Calcutta society.

Table 10

Disintegration of co-resident & commensal kingroups of Calcutta refugees since leaving East Pakistan		Platform sample	Hovel sample	Colony sample	City sample	Total
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Entire kingroup left East Pakistan in	One phase	33	26	18	14	91
	More than one phase	12	14	23	25	74
	(sub-total)	45	40	41	39	165
A part of the kingroup is still there		7	14	12	9	42
Total		52	54	53	48	207

Therefore, while four phases of migration were all that were required at the maximum for the city sample, the course of migration extended to six phases for the colony sample. Because the constituents of the latter had less contact with Calcutta prior to the "partition" and so they dribbled in stages after their more adventurous kins and affines had paved the way for their eventual settlement here.

The relative differences between the city and the colony samples are, of course, of a small magnitude. Yet the trend of change found with respect to the previous livelihood of these displaced persons and the facilities they could get to settle down in Calcutta may be regarded as worthy of note. For this is brought into relief when distinguishing the platform and the hovel samples with respect to the opportunities their constituents received to adjust themselves to the changed situation.

Thus we find that while compared to the colony and city segments relatively larger numbers of refugee-units in platform and hovel segments left East Pakistan *en bloc*, this course of migration was particularly underlined for the platform sample. And we also find that even though in either sample the refugee-units which migrated in successive segments completed the course of migration in three phases at the most (except in one case), much fewer units in the platform than in the hovel sample had any one of their previous co-resident and commensal kin or affine left in Pakistan (Table 10).

That is, when these people left Pakistan, the constituents of neither the platform nor the hovel sample could organize their future settlement in India in terms of previous contacts or immediate experience of their fore-runners. Additionally, more members of the platform than of the hovel sample had to, or did, sever their contact with homeland at a stroke and left no moorings there.

So that, when virtually all the members of these two segments of Calcutta refugees went first to settle in rural India in the light of the life and living they were familiar with, more of the platform than of the hovel sample had to bear in mind that they would have to open a new leaf definitely; there being practically no vestiges left in Pakistan to turn back. And, significantly, we notice that three-fourths of those in the platform sample were located outside

West Bengal (in Assam, Orissa, and even in Saurashtra in Western India) as against nine-tenths of those in hovel sample located within West Bengal.

In order to shape their future, the constituents of the platform sample were thus agreeable to settle even in distant lands,—as foreign to them for all practical purposes as is Bulgaria to a German, for example. And thus located, while the possibility of remaining in the “high” economic group as in Pakistan was lost to the few belonging to either of the two samples, most of the remaining refugee-units now belonging to the platform sample could resume their familiar occupations at the new settlement.

✓The privilege of becoming peasants again was, no doubt, denied to half their corresponding number in East Pakistan. But as retail sellers they increased their strength in order to compensate partly the loss thus sustained by remaining engaged in activities ancillary to agriculture. That is, while undergoing occupational mobility, a large number of them did not go down the economic ladder (Table 7).

On the contrary, an appreciable proportion of the refugee-units now belonging to the hovel sample could not thus rehabilitate themselves. Like for the platform sample, half of their corresponding number in East Pakistan lost the privilege of remaining as peasants. But in the case of this sample, not only there was no compensatory gain in the group of retail sellers or craftsman, but a large number of the refugee-units in this sample went down the economic ladder in order to earn their livelihood as domestic servant, etc., or to live on charity (Table 7).

Therefore, these “unsettled” refugee-units were the first to move into Calcutta, and build its peculiar settlement. The other “not properly settled” ones also followed in their wake. So that the hovel sample shows that 65 per cent of its constituent units came to Calcutta within 2-5 years from the date of our investigation, as subsequent to a smaller but appreciable number (26%) in the earlier 5 years.

Meanwhile, the relatively stable life which the refugee-units presently affiliated to the platform sample had built up in villages outside West Bengal by dint of their own labour, and in conformity

with the way of life they were familer with, disrupted again. ✓ Due to anti-Bengalee riots in Assam and for other weighty reasons, they had to be on the move again. And thus forced to migrate and eventually come down to Sealdah Station in bulk *within* the last two years of our investigation (in 65% cases), they found hardly any avenue left to settle down in Calcutta even semi-permanently. Because, in the meantime, the hovels had usurped the sites to erect shelters and their residents had used up practically whatever possibilities were there of making a living somehow.

In this way, the four distinct segments of the Calcutta refugees emerged in Calcutta society in terms of their previous and immediately past course of life and living.

## V

The distinctions brought about within the group of displaced persons as the upshot of their two different courses of living in East Bengal, the different courses of migration they undertook in one or more phases, and the nature of settlement they could establish in Calcutta accordingly were reflected in their day to day living. They also led to distinct ways of life the Calcutta refugees could build in the city in the economic, social, and ideological aspects.

As already noted, the constituents of the city sample were able to fare the best in the circumstances. Very few of them went down the economic ladder ; even relatively less than the constituents of the colony sample. The colony sample stood next best in this respect. (Table 5 and 6).

The constituents of the hovel sample, on the other hand, went further down the ladder in comparison with what they had suffered after moving into their last settlement in India from East Pakistan. ✓ For we notice that more of these people had to take to low-grade services to make their living ; such as, becoming unlicenced railway porters, attendant or dish-washer in teashops, etc. (Table 11).

Table 11

Source of livelihood of Calcutta refugees in East Pakistan and in Calcutta	Platform sample		Hovel sample		Platform-Hovel sample	
	While in East Pakistan	In Calcutta	While in East Pakistan	In Calcutta	While in East Pakistan	In Calcutta
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
High-grade service or profession	4	1	8	7	12	8
Wholesale trade	1	—	—	—	1	—
Rent from land	2	—	3	—	5	—
Economic affiliation-High	7	1	11	7	18	8
Cultivation	16	—	20	—	36	—
Shopkeeping or peddling	22	15	19	22	41	37
Craft	3	3	3	9	6	12
Low-grade service or profession	2	24	1	13	3	37
Charity	2	9	—	3	2	12
Economic affiliation-Low	45	51	43	47	88	98
Total	52	52	54	54	106	106

But we also notice concurrently that in reference to their numbers engaged in retail trade or craft production in East Pakistan or in their last settlement in India, larger numbers now took to shopkeeping and working as artisans. And we further notice that a lesser number of them now depended on charity than in their last settlement. (Tables 7 and 11).

These changes in the occupational profile of the gainfully employed persons in the hovel sample are largely due to their course of migration to Calcutta and the economic opportunities available round about the Sealdah railway station. Thus, as noted at the beginning, those of them who could occupy the front line of the sites to erect their shelters could also avail themselves of the

opportunity to open shops at the entrance to their hovels for selling sundry goods to the railway passengers and the people of the locality. Then, a large number of teashops, etc., surrounding the station area could employ some of the remaining workers in this sample as all-purpose hands. And the large number of furniture shops, which have sprung up in recent times on one side of the railway station by encroaching upon the pavement, could engage the carpenters, etc., as found among these migrants.

That is, although divorced from the rural economy altogether and although in a number of cases the occupational mobility effected demotion of the workers concerned, the constituents of the hovel sample could still manage a living in Calcutta on the basis of such occupations with which they were not previously unfamiliar. Interestingly, it is noticed that nearly the same number of persons in these groups were still engaged in high-grade services and professions as they were in East Pakistan and unlike what it was in their last settlement in India (Tables 7 and 11).

Briefly, in purely economic terms, these people possibly fared better than what they did in their last settlement in India, and thus somehow managed to strike a root in Calcutta society entirely on their own initiative and efforts. Even so, they were not able to attain that level of economic stability as registered by the members of the colony and city samples. For virtually all of the earners among them were found engaged in jobs which were temporary, unlike in the case of the earners in the colony and city samples who were mostly engaged in permanent occupations (Table 12).

Table 12

Nature of employment of the "earners" in refugees-units	Platform sample	Hovel sample	Colony sample	City sample	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Permanent	—	—	35	33	68
Permanent and Temporary	—	1	6	4	11
Temporary	43	50	12	10	115
None (unit living on charity)	9	3		1	13
Total number of units	52	54	53	48	207



The constituents of the platform sample fared far worse. Among them, the number depending on low-grade services and professions went up strikingly; just as the number living on charity. And, additionally, very few of them could avail themselves of the demands in the locality for artisans and petty traders because such opportunities had already been utilized by the relatively fortunate members of the hovel sample. Moreover, while in East Pakistan 4 units belonging to this sample were engaged in high-grade services and professions, only one was able to maintain his professional status all through the period of devastation since becoming a refugee (Tables 7 and 11).

That is, by taking to any kind of casual work as available (Table 12), the members of the platform sample were not able to rehabilitate themselves in any way.

Such distinctions in the economic life of the Calcutta refugees are obvious from the income of the refugee-units in respective samples. Thereby, a clear gradation can be made among them, with the city segment at the top, the colony segment placed next; thereafter the hovel segment, and the platform segment at the bottom (Table 13). And these income differences are reflected

Table 13

Monthly income of the Calcutta refugees		Platform sample	Hovel sample	Colony sample	City sample	Total
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Per refugee unit	Less than Rs 75	46	39	13	7	105
	Rs 75—Rs 150	6	15	13	16	50
	More than Rs. 150	—	—	27	25	52
Total number of refugee-units in the sample		52	54	53	48	207
Per capita income of the refugees in the sample		Rs 8	Rs. 10	Rs. 24	Rs. 26	Rs. 17

ipso facto in their day to day life; viz. in respect of their dwelling, food consumed, the social and religious ceremonies performed by them, and so on.

As regards habitation, hardly any comment is required for the platform and the hovel segments. Between the two, the distinction

is merely of relative opportunity. Because had the constituents of the platform sample come to Calcutta earlier than those of the other sample, they could have equally built such "hovels"

Between the colony and the city samples, however, a notable distinction in day to day living is registered with reference to the houses they live in. For two-thirds of the units in the city sample live in the brick-built houses as against one-third of the units in the colony sample. And in other details of their housing structure also there are significant differences, as found during the investigation.

In terms of food-habits, on the other hand, there is hardly any difference between the city and the colony sample. The people belonging to either of the two can manage two meals a day, and the diet does not consistently lack in animal protein in the form of fish, meat or eggs, milk or milk products; although such items of food may not be consumed with each and every meal. But an examination of the platform and hovel samples in this context showed that while in either sample the menu usually consisted of only rice and lentil soup or a little vegetable (even though fish is an indispensable item of food for the Hindus of East Bengal), only three-fifths of the members of the platform sample could manage two meals a day as against three-fourths of the hovel sample.

Similarly, the incidence of social and religious ceremonies of these people becomes increasingly more frequent as we proceed from the platform sample to, lastly, the city sample. For this purpose, only the most obligatory ceremonies were brought to account. Such as, the periodic worship of the family deity (like the God Satyanarayan or the Goddess Lakshmi) which is a must to the Hindu families living under such divine patronage for generations, or the absolutely obligatory rites and ceremonies associated with the life-cycle of an individual (viz. at birth, at the accession of the twice-born status by a Brahmin with the wearing of the sacred thread, at marriage, and at death) || So that the expectation would be that as social beings and as belonging to the Bengali Hindu society these people must perform these social and religious ceremonies except under the most abnormal conditions of living h

Even so it was found that only three cases of family deity worship took place in the platform sample since the arrival of its

constituents in Calcutta, and they had not observed any social ceremony at all. Whereas, cases of family deity worship were more frequent in the other three samples of Calcutta refugees; and in terms of proportionate occurrence of social ceremonies in them, these segments can be arranged in an ascending order from "hovel" to "colony" and then to "city" (Table 14).

Table 14

Socio-religious ceremonies performed by the refugee-units since their arrival in Calcutta		Platform sample	Hovel sample	Colony sample	City sample	Total
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Number of refugee-units involved		3	10	16	21	50
Percentage of those involved to total refugee-units		6	19	30	44	24
Number of ceremonies performed by the units involved	Religious*	3	10	4	9	26
	Social**	—	3	28	33	64
Total		3	13	32	42	90
Number of ceremonies for which priests were called	Religious	—	—	4	8	12
	Social	—	2	28	32	62
Total		—	2	32	40	74
Number of ceremonies for which guests were invited	Religious	—	2	2	6	10
	Social	—	3	25	30	58
Total		—	5	27	36	68
Number of similar ceremonies performed by others on the occasion of which the members of the sampled refugee-units were invited as guests		—	7	16	25	48

\*Religious ceremonies refer to the occasional worship of the family deity.

\*\*Social ceremonies refer to those associated with the individual life-cycle of the members of the refugee-units; viz. (1) at birth, (2) at the sacred thread (*upanayan*) ceremony of the Brahmins—also performed now-a-days in Bengal by a section of the Vaidyas and Kayasthas (i.e., "high" Hindu castes) or even of other castes, (3) at marriage, and (4) at death.

We also find that following the spectrum of platform—hovel—colony—city segments of the Calcutta refugees, on increasingly larger number of occasions priests were called in to attain the desired solemnity of the ceremonies instead of the families managing the affairs themselves and thus performing them somehow in order to meet an unavoidable social or religious obligation (Table 14).

Furthermore, we notice in the same context that on successively larger number of occasions the refugee-units belonging to the hovel—colony—city samples invited guests to participate in these ceremonies, or they themselves were invited to such ceremonies performed by others (Table 14).

The four segments of Calcutta refugees thus indicate relative poverty and prosperity in the economic aspect of their life, and express their relative ability and achievement to live as social beings. Thereby, the usefulness of a schematic representation of these people as forming a spectrum of four segments is substantiated in reference to how they live in Calcutta today.

The spectrum also exhibits the different ways of life they have thus built in the metropolis. This would be appreciated from an examination of the social relations they have formed with others in terms of their familial rites and ceremonies, their recreational activities, help received by them in cases of emergency or in respect of such vital requirements in society for which mutual aid would be socially permissible and expected, the territorial sphere of their economic activities, and so on.

That way we find that the constituents of the platform sample do not belong to Calcutta society in any way. In all the above aspects of integration in the life of a community, they are virtually spectators and not participants (Tables 14-19). Even in case of emergency they seldom received help from others; and when they did that also was found to be restricted mostly to their fellow squatters on the railway platforms who are unrelated by any bond of kinship or affinity but are held together by the stronger bond of comradeship in distress (Table 17).

Briefly, these people merely existed and awaited government or public intervention to settle them in rural areas wherever possible. Till then, this segment of the Calcutta refugees remained in the metropolis in transit.

Those living in hovels, on the other hand, had made use of whatever opportunities were there to build shelter, to make a living and to settle down on that basis. And they had thus settled down in Calcutta to such an extent that although relatively in fewer numbers, socio-religious ceremonies were performed by them, priests were called and guests were invited on some of these occasions. Also they themselves were invited by others to participate in similar instances. (Table 14).

Their life, however, centred round their immediate neighbourhood. The two cases of marriage which had taken place in their community had the contracting parties living in the same site as refugees (Table 15). The guests they had invited on the occasion

Table 15

Sphere of social relation of the Calcutta refugees in terms of marriages taking place in their units since their arrival in Calcutta.		Incidence of marriage				
		Platform sample	Hovel sample	Colony sample	City sample	Total
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Pre-partition affiliation of the contracting parties	Same district of East Pakistan	—	1	10	14	25
	Other districts of East Pakistan	—	1	—	—	1
	Elsewhere	—	—	—	—	—
	Total	—	2	10	14	26
Present location of the contracting parties	Hovel	—	2	—	—	2
	Colony	—	—	6	—	6
	City	—	—	4	14	18
Total		—	2	10	14	26
Citizenship of the contracting parties	Refugee	—	2	10	10	22
	Others	—	—	—	4	4
	Total	—	2	10	14	26

of their socio-religious ceremonies were also almost entirely refugees from neighbouring hovels, unrelated to the hosts by kinship or affinity. And those who invited the constituents of our hovel sample to the socio-religious ceremonies performed in their families were also unrelated "hovel" refugees. (Table 16).

Table 16

Social relations developed by the refugee-units in respect of socio-religious ceremonies performed by them or others since their arrival in Calcutta		Number of ceremonies concerned					
		Platform sample	Hovel sample	Colony sample	City sample	Total	
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Priests called by refugee-units are :	Refugee	—	—	24	10	34	
	Others	—	2	2	3	7	
	Both	—	—	6	27	33	
	Neighbour	—	—	18	2	20	
	Others	—	2	1	18	21	
	Both	—	—	13	20	33	
Total number of ceremonies		—	2	32	40	74	
Guests invited by refugee-units are :	Relative	—	—	9	2	11	
	Others	—	5	—	10	15	
	Both	—	—	18	24	42	
	Refugee	—	4	19	3	26	
	Others	—	—	—	10	10	
	Both	—	1	8	23	32	
	Neighbour	—	5	8	—	13	
	Others	—	—	4	31	35	
	Both	—	—	15	5	20	
Total number of ceremonies		—	5	27	36	68	
Other persons who invited members of refugee-units as guests to their socio-religious ceremonies are :	Relative	—	—	5	7	12	
	Others	—	7	1	7	15	
	Both	—	—	10	11	21	
	Refugee	—	7	8	7	22	
	Others	—	—	2	7	9	
	Both	—	—	6	11	17	
	Neighbour	—	7	5	—	12	
	Others	—	—	4	19	23	
	Both	—	—	7	6	13	
Total number of ceremonies		—	7	16	25	48	

Moreover, in building their shelter, in securing jobs or the Government "refugee loan", in the event of illness of these persons or when they faced starvation on occasional instances due to shortage of funds, etc., or in all other cases of emergency and their vital requirements to live as social beings (such as, to meet the expenses at the death of a family member, to produce the dowry when giving a daughter in marriage, to perform the unavoidable obligation of a social or religious ceremony, or for the education of children, etc.), the help received by this segment of Calcutta refugees came predominantly from the refugee-units forming the same community of "hovel" dwellers irrespective of any bond of kinship or affinity (Table 17).

Table 17

Characteristics of the persons who helped the Calcutta refugees in cases of emergency and vital societal requirements *	Number of occasions				
	Platform sample	Hovel sample	Colony sample	City sample	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6) -
Relative	—	5	10	9	24
Others	9	31	2	12	54
Both	—	4	1	2	7
Total	9	40	13	23	85
Refugee	7	27	11	9	54
Others	2	10	2	11	25
Both	—	3	—	3	6
Total	9	40	13	23	85
Neighbour	6	33	2	2	43
Others	3	5	9	20	37
Both	—	2	2	1	5
Total	9	40	13	23	85

\*To build shelter, secure job or Government "refugee loan", ward off occasional lack of funds, meet expenses on education of children, illness, death, marriage, etc.

Also the organizations they had set up or joined for recreation and pleasure were located in their site and meant for them only (Table 18).

Table 18

Voluntary association of members of refugee-units with public organizations		Number of refugee-units involved				
		Platform sample	Hovel sample	Colony sample	City sample	Total
		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Clubs organized by	Local refugees	—	5	7	1	13
	Non-refugees	—	—	—	6	6
	Total	—	5	7	7	19
Libraries organized by	Local refugees	—	—	18	3	21
	Non-refugees	—	—	—	2	2
	Total	—	—	18	5	23

These people had thus developed an exclusive neighbourhood with the least possible contact with others in Calcutta. The contacts they had through economic relation with the people residing in the area surrounding the railway station (Table 19) had not enlarged their sphere of social relation by any means.

Parochial existence is less marked in the colony sample, but it is still the dominant note among these people. Commensurate with their economic position, more cases of socio-religious ceremonies are found to have occurred among its constituents than among those of the hovel sample. But as hosts or guests, or with reference to the priests they have called in to perform the ceremonies, the sphere of contact is seen to lie mainly within the group of refugees and largely within the neighbourhood; with the bond of kinship and affinity striking a dominant note in this process of integration among them (Table 16). Also the cases of marriage which have taken place since the arrival of these people in Calcutta point to their regional integration with the refugees from homeland living at present mostly in the same or similar refugee colonies (Table 15).

Similarly, in terms of cooperation received from others in cases of emergency or obligatory societal commitments as enumerated above, the integration among them as refugees and relatives is seen



to play an important role (Table 17). Also the recreational activities of these people are seen to have centred round the colonies they live in (Table 18); and their economic activities, likewise, are restricted to an appreciable extent within the same or the neighbouring area (Table 19).

Table 19

Place of work of the Calcutta refugees	Number of gainfully employed persons				
	Platform sample	Hovel sample	Colony sample	City sample	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
At the site	8	21	19	3	51
Immediate neighbourhood (2-mile radius)	33	18	6	—	57
Distant neighbourhood (beyond 2-mile radius)	—	—	18	—	18
"Office area" of Calcutta	—	—	16	33	49
Anywhere else in Calcutta	3	2	6	23	34
Outside Calcutta	3	3	10	8	24
No fixed place of work	6	18	8	2	34
Total number of gainfully employed persons	53	65	83	69	270

Summarily, therefore, we notice that these people (nearly half of the total number of displaced families in the city) have moved mostly in groups related to one another and as representing their previous affiliation to particular districts (or even villages) in East Bengal. Arriving in Calcutta, they have established "colonies" with distinct names for their identification, and tend to pursue compartmentally the life they had in East Bengal. In these colonies they have erected huts, built roads, opened shops of all kinds, founded educational and recreational centres of their own, and have thus tried to establish in Calcutta replicas of their previous settlements in East Bengal. This remains, as yet, the dominant note in the life of those belonging to this segment of Calcutta refugees.

Lastly, those belonging to the city sample have more or less merged themselves with the local *milieu*. Obviously, their best economic condition out of all the four segments of Calcutta refugees

accounts for the largest number of socio-religious ceremonies performed by them since their arrival in Calcutta, in which priests were called and guests were invited. Also for the same reason they themselves were invited to participate as guests on many such occasions. Because these people would naturally move in the circle of such persons as have the financial ability to perform these socio-religious ceremonies and to invite guests on that account. What, however, is significant to note contextually is that in the majority of cases in which the members of this sample were guests or hosts the social relations involved cut across their identification as refugees or their integration to the neighbourhood and relatives only (Table 16).

To be sure, the cases of marriage which have occurred in their family are restricted to the people from the same district of East Bengal, and largely to refugees; as would have been equally found among the people of West Bengal. Such as, an autochthonous family of Calcutta would prefer to bring a bride or bridegroom from another autochthonous family of the metropolis. What, on the other hand, is again distinctive of the displaced persons belonging to the city sample is that in all cases the matrimonial alliance effected by them refers to "refugees" belonging to the same "city" segment (Table 15).

Additionally, we notice that in an appreciable number of cases these people had called in *exclusively* the "non-relative, non-refugee and non-neighbour" persons as priests to their socio-religious ceremonies and had also invited *exclusively* that category of persons as guests. Furthermore, on a large number of occasions they themselves were invited by the same category of persons as hosts, and received cooperation from such individuals *exclusively* in cases of emergency or the vital demands of society described before (Tables 16 and 17).

The recreational activities of these people also are connected more with the "non-refugee" establishments and organizations than of the refugees (Table 18). And we notice further that the sphere of economic activities of this segment of Calcutta refugees is extended all over Calcutta, with a heavy concentration on what is known as the "office area"; as would have been expected in the case of the natives of Calcutta (Table 19).

That is, the distinguishing feature worthy of record in reference to the city sample is that its constituents still declare themselves as "displaced persons"; otherwise, there is hardly any precise attribute to classify them as refugees.

In terms of the different ways of life they exhibited in Calcutta in 1962, the spectrum of the Calcutta refugees may therefore be described as follows :

The platform segment remained outside the pale of Calcutta society, leading an *a-social* existence.

The hovel segment remained within but anachronistic to Calcutta society ; its constituents having built a mole-hill and borrowing themselves in, and coming out to move around the surrounding area only for sustenance.

The colony segment stood (and still stands) for undissolved ingredients of the Calcutta society *yet to be* ; emphasizing the "pockets" of East Bengal which have not been harmonized with the prevailing contents of the metropolis.

And the city segment represents the end process of assimilation of the displaced persons from East Pakistan into the Calcutta society.

## VI

The respective ways of life represented by the four segments of the Calcutta refugees suggest that they would have different aspirations for the future. These aspirations, again, should be interpreted in the light of the expectations they had when arriving in Calcutta and how they feel to have fared in that context. Otherwise, what they wish for the future may not be appreciated correctly.

For we notice that the shreds of expectation of these people when arriving in Calcutta fall under two categories, associated with the city-colony and the platform-hovel samples, respectively. Namely, the majority of the constituents of the city-colony samples were specific as to the form of rehabilitation they expected in the metropolis, and these were to get into high-grade services or to

open a commercial enterprise, etc., in conformity with their previous sources of livelihood and their contact with the urban sector of society before the "partition" took place (Table 20).

Table 20

"Expectations" of the Calcutta refugees when arriving in Calcutta		Platform sample	Hovel sample	Colony sample	City sample	Total
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Expectation	None specific or general	7	8	—	1	16
	Rehabilitation somehow	45	46	24	13	128
	Government help to secure job, open com- mercial enter- prise, etc	—	—	19	30	49
	Relatives' help to secure job, open commer- cial enterprise, etc	—	—	10	4	14
	Total	52	54	53	48	207
Its fulfilment	Yes	—	—	6	8	14
	No	52	54	47	40	193
Total		52	54	53	48	207
Why not fulfilled ?	Do not know	32	29	3	1	65
	"Official" in- difference	20	25	23	11	79
	Lack of oppor- tunity for jobs & "trade"	—	—	8	16	24
	No scope to make adequate income	—	—	13	12	25
Total number of units concerned		52	54	47	40	193

Whereas, soaked in the rural atmosphere both before the "partition" and afterwards in their settlement in Indian villages, such expectations in the metropolis would have been foreign to those belonging to the platform and the hovel samples. Therefore, on their arrival in Calcutta, while some of the displaced persons belonging to these two samples failed to specify any specific or general expectation whatsoever, the rest expressed their desire to be rehabilitated somehow (Table 20).

The expectations, however, were not fulfilled in the great majority of cases, the few exceptions being recorded for the colony and the city samples, relatively more for the latter. Even so, when asked why their expectations were not fulfilled, the answers followed the same dichotomy as noticed in stating the "expectations".

Namely, the bulk of those belonging to the platform and the hovel samples could not specify any reason and the rest attributed the failure to the indifference of the relevant government organizations. Those belonging to the city and the colony samples, on the other hand, clearly stated the reason in a large number of cases as lack of opportunities to secure jobs or to open commercial enterprises, or, at any rate, the absence of any scope for making an adequate income. (Table 20).

Thus, by and large, the "expectations" of the city-colony samples, on the one hand, and of the platform-hovel samples, on the other, followed the pattern of life and living of the Calcutta refugees in East Pakistan. But within such a major division subtle differences can be noticed in reference to their reactions to the current situation *vis-a-vis* their "expectations". For, although an appreciable proportion of both the samples spoke of "official" indifference, the constituents of the city sample were more vocal than the constituents of the colony sample about the lack of opportunity to secure jobs and about the lack of scope for economic sufficiency. Similarly, more of the hovel than of the platform sample attributed the reason for non-fulfilment of their expectations to "official" indifference. (Table 20).

That is, while in terms of their expectations on arrival at Calcutta the platform and hovel samples could be treated alike, and the colony and city samples likewise, differences among the four

segments began to emerge in course of their living in Calcutta in order to crystallize their attitude towards the future

*Prima Facie*, however, the bulk of the displaced persons in all the four samples appear to have been frustrated. So about two-thirds of them in each of these samples declared that fate would decide their future. Interestingly, about a quarter in each of the platform, hovel, and colony samples (but less than one-tenth in the city sample) expressed the hope that the government would eventually come to their aid. And, significantly, a noticeable number of persons in the hovel sample (11% of the total) were found not to have lost their initiative in the matter, and so wished to shape their future by becoming pedlars or by opening tiny tea-shops, etc, in conformity with the enterprises they had become acquainted with currently.

For the others in these samples also the sense of frustration, logical as it is, had not totally crushed their hopes for the future. This becomes evident from the answers they gave when asked to suggest how the "refugee problem" could be solved irrespective of how they had fared in that context. For that way their personal involvement in the issue could have been separated as far as possible and one could get an inkling of the fond hopes they nourished in their minds in spite of all the vicissitudes they had undergone since leaving their hearth and home in East Pakistan.

On this count we noticed that 85 per cent of the constituents of the city sample could not suggest any specific measure or had no idea at all in this respect ; except that 15 per cent of them wished the refugees to be rehabilitated within Calcutta or within West Bengal, evidently giving vent to their partisanship to Bengal thereby in line with the spontaneous and uncritical reaction of the common people.

The members of the colony sample, on the other hand, had no objection to the settlement of the refugees anywhere in India ; but two-thirds of them also could not specify any measure for their rehabilitation. Significantly, the few specific measures suggested referred to provision of jobs or creation of facilities to open commercial enterprises, or financial assistance from the Government to the refugees in order that they may shape their own future.

✓ Virtually all the constituents of the platform and the hovel samples also did not care where in India the refugees were settled. But, unlike for the colony and the city samples, the majority of these people came out with specific measures to be adopted for their rehabilitation; and on that count they exhibited some difference between these two samples. Namely, the constituents of the platform sample were proportionately more inclined to have the refugees settled in rural areas by providing them with cultivable land; whereas those of the hovel sample mentioned more frequently (in 43% cases as against 29% for the platform sample) the provision of jobs, facilities to open commercial enterprises, and loan from the government to the refugees as the solution to the problem.

Thus we find that the image of the future also was formed out of the previous experience of the Calcutta refugees and the avenues they had become familiar with currently in order to pursue them. Because of this, in respect of their course of life in the metropolis, the members of the city and the colony samples could take a positive stand—practical and feasible or not, but beyond that their mental horizon remained vague and obscure.

Contrariwise, in respect of their life in the metropolis, the mental horizon of the constituents of the hovel sample remained circumscribed and of those of the platform sample undefined. But beyond that, the bulk of the platform dwellers cherished their hope of settling down again on the basis of agricultural and ancillary activities, and the hovel dwellers also either that way or on the basis of being engaged to the kind of work they had become increasingly familiar with since their arrival in Calcutta and which they may undertake anywhere in India—in rural or urban areas.

In the above perspective, therefore, and against the background of their current ways of life, we should examine how best the displaced persons from East Pakistan could be assimilated in Indian society. Because, apart from political considerations, their current life indicates that for the members of all the four segments of Calcutta refugees any suggestion to return to their homeland would be irrelevant.

This has already been pointed out when referring to the remnants in Pakistan, if any, of the pre-partition co-resident and

commensal kingroups of the Calcutta refugees (Table 10). And it may be further noted that even in the few cases where a portion of the pre-partition "family" of the Calcutta refugees still lived in East Pakistan, the present refugee-units were found to have either lost contact with them (in 43% of the relevant cases) or maintain it through casual correspondence only (in 53% of such cases), as any one would with his kins and affines staying elsewhere.

Some of the displaced persons belonging to the city and the colony segments may occasionally visit Pakistan. But such cases merely indicate that they are steadily making the last preparations to sever finally their contacts with the homeland; the necessity for such contacts still arising in most cases out of the economic relations they had built in there through ownership of land, extension of commercial enterprises, etc.

So that, India has to be their homeland henceforth; as found to be the key-note of the efforts all the refugees from Pakistan making now-a-days.

In India also the future of these people cannot be visualized either as a mere duplication of their course of living in Pakistan or as a new life altogether irrespective of their previous background and the experience accumulated in the intervening period. As to the former, the situation was made clear by the government report quoted earlier (*vide*, Note 4). The foregoing pages also confirm that the refugees from any station of life in Pakistan could not just repeat their course of living in India.

And the more important point, referring also to the latter of the two conditions above, is that in course of their ups and downs in India since leaving Pakistan they have veered to ways of life which can no more be indentical with what was pursued in East Bengal. So much so that their primary unit of social organization, *viz.* the co-resident and commensal kingroups they belonged to before migration from East Pakistan, have undergone substantial changes since arriving in India. And, interestingly, this is the most marked in the city sample which has fared the best out of all the four samples of Calcutta refugees during their phase of re-settlement.

This may appear contradictory to the previous assertion that these people were in large number of cases returning back to the



“normal” joint family organization. But, instead of proving that assertion to be untrue, the changes indicate that while their over-all economic, social and ideological make-up may not (and, in fact, did not) undergo a qualitative transformation, the force which disrupted their previous course of life brought in new alignments therein ; affecting even their familial organization

Such as, the kinship composition of the refugee-units changed while in India (a) entirely by the process of fission in the case of the platform sample, (b) almost entirely by the same process only in the case of the hovel and the colony samples, and (c) by both fission and fusion in the case of the city sample. Additionally we notice that the city sample registered the largest number of cases of break-up of the pre-partition family-units ; followed by the colony sample and thereafter by the hovel and the platform samples, successively (Table 21).

Table 21

Shift in the kinship composition of the refugee-units from what it was in East Pakistan and what it was in Calcutta in 1962	Number of refugee-units concerned				
	Platform sample	Hovel sample	Colony sample	City sample	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
None	30	19	19	10	78
New entrants to units other than by birth	—	3	3	8	14
Exit of previous unit-members other than by death	22	29	31	24	106
Both ways	—	3	—	6	9
Total	52	51	53	48	207

That is, swept off their foundation by the whirlwind of communal disaster, the refugee-units belonging to all the four segments have come to a decision through their process of re-settlement as to their preferred composition. And that way they wish to face the future.

Indeed, the decision has been so thorough that either there is no more contact among the component parts in India (in 30% cases) or the contact is maintained largely through correspondence (in 58% cases). Necessarily, therefore, the future course of life of the displaced persons will have to be viewed in terms of their present

*units* of existence, and in the light of the way of life they have evolved, respectively, through their past and succeeding experience.

## VII

At this stage of following the career of the Calcutta refugees, the above may appear as an unnecessary statement. But it would be useful to emphasize its content because, on the one hand, the viewpoint that the refugees should be settled in India exactly as they lived in Pakistan is frequently asserted uncritically by the public and the press. On the other, the viewpoint that they may *somehow* be given the economic possibility to make a living appears to be the common basis of rehabilitation measures undertaken by the government or philanthropic organizations—Indian or foreign.

As opposed to either of these two stands commonly taken, we may note therefore how the four segments of the Calcutta refugees require different approaches to solve their problems in the light of the analysis made in the foregoing pages. Because the failure to appreciate that, or to bring it to its logical conclusion, appears to be the main cause for the persistence of this gangrenous growth in the social organism of Calcutta.

Repeated attempts had been made to remove the platform-dwellers from the scene, and to shift the hovel-dwellers. The colony-dwellers have been appealed, once and again, to feel "one-ness" with the *milieu* of Calcutta; and the city-dwelling refugees have been asked to forget that they are "refugees". But even after successive forcible removals, the platform-dwellers were found to have returned to the scene, or new squatters to take their place. The hovel-dwellers refused to move, the colony-dwellers go on clamouring for better conditions for the colonies and for their inhabitants; and the city-dwelling refugees have, evidently, not forgotten their label.

So that the failure to solve the "refugee-problem" in spite of genuine efforts made by the Government and private organisations has frequently led us to confer "value judgement" on the intrinsic

peculiarity of these particular "refugees" as lazy, parasitic, and without any enterprise. This interpretation has mostly followed from the experience of governmental and non-governmental attempts to organize the displaced persons in handicraft centres or in other forms of productions and services directly related, or ancillary, to the urban economy.

Similarly, the obvious failure of the platform-hovel segments of the Calcutta refugees to rehabilitate themselves as against the relative success attained by the city-colony segments has sometimes been interpreted in terms of "value considerations". Namely, the apparent resilience and adaptability of city-colony dwellers (and of those who have rehabilitated themselves elsewhere in rural or urban India) in contradistinction to the tradition-bound, passive and fatalistic attitude of those living in the railway station or in the adjoining lands.

But neither esoteric "value consideration" nor abstract "value judgment" has led us anywhere so far. We may, therefore, examine the respective *soft spots* in this marginal group in Calcutta so that their future may be paved by measures relevant to them and specifically applicable to them.

Pursuantly, we notice that the city segment of displaced persons does not need any special consideration as "refugees". In their way of life, they show virtually no difference with the *milieu* of Calcutta. They have taken their position in the middle class of Calcutta, economically and culturally (Table 22-25). Therefore,

Table 22

Maximum level of education attained by any member of a refugee-unit	Platform sample	Hovel sample	Colony sample	City sample	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
None at home or elsewhere	19	9	1	1	30
At home, to write and read a few lines	10	10	2	1	23
At school, below matriculation standard	23	35	35	29	122
At school or college, matriculation and above	—	—	15	17	32
Total	52	54	53	48	207

they voice the common demand of the citizens belonging to that economic stratum, but in order to take advantage of the situation place their demand for economic opportunity or sufficiency as "refugees". Any special treatment in their case, therefore, would be invidious in reference to the society at large.

In a large measure, the colony-dwellers share the same future. Because it is evident from their background and the way of life they have built up in Calcutta that their *soft spot* refers to improving their position within the city's economy. But on that very count it is noted that they have one special grievance to be attended to as a handicapped community in Calcutta today; namely, their status in the metropolis as citizen.

They settled in Calcutta as squatters on others' land. Therefore, they were not given the status of citizenship by the civic body, Calcutta Corporation, although they developed the previously uninhabited areas purely on their own initiative and effort and thus facilitated the eventual inclusion of these areas into the map of Calcutta. So that it was only natural that failing to enter into Calcutta's civic life, what they were used to previously would go on playing a dominant note in their way of life.

Hence, given the necessary stability to their habitation and the recognition of their status of citizenship accordingly, these foreign pockets in Calcutta are likely to be assimilated in the larger society. Because, firstly, that would give their residents the objective basis to feel "one-ness" with the *milieu* of Calcutta. Secondly, land being the most coveted commodity in the metropolis and these people being henceforth in a position to buy and sell land, the cross-currents of Calcutta society would permeate fully into these areas as well.

Eventually, therefore, through the process of new settlement and re-settlement, and the extension of the same civic privileges and obligations into these pockets as applicable to the city proper at the moment, these undissolved ingredients of the Calcutta society *yet to be* would be fully assimilated. The only distinction the present-day "refugee colonies" may maintain thereafter, severally or in some territorial clusters, would be such regional (as for example, "*para*"-wise) demarcations as are there in Calcutta society virtually since its formation.

Indeed, signs to this effect are already there with the measures taken by the Government to settle the ownership of the lands the "colony refugees" have occupied forcibly (Table 23).

Table 23

Rights of the Calcutta refugees on their habitation		Platform sample	Hovel sample	Colony sample	City sample	Total
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
None	Squatting on forcibly occupied territory	52	54	11	—	117
None	Living in relatives' house	—	—	9	2	11
Tenancy right		—	—	9	41	50
Proprietary right		—	—	24	5	29
Total		52	54	53	48	207

As to the hovel and the platform segments of Calcutta refugees, the future of these displaced persons lies obviously in a setting totally different from their present one. But whether or not that setting would be within the sphere of Calcutta society or any other urban or rural society, it cannot be a random choice out of all which, theoretically, can provide these people with a decent roof above their head, a reasonably satisfactory civic life, and a steady employment to the earners of the families.

For many of those living in the hovels or on the railway platforms could be found to show eagerness to go "anywhere" for a permanent settlement and to try "anything" for an adequate living. This was again substantiated by a sample survey conducted in 1963 by the Bengal Refugee Service among these people. But such spontaneous reactions of these refugees indicate only the first-half of reality ; namely, their desperate desire to get away from their current living conditions. They do not indicate, necessarily, that when the immediate crisis is over they would really live "anywhere" or try "anything" for living in an altered situation.

This is what we have found time and again, whenever an external force disrupted the society of Bengal or, for that matter, any society in India. Only as recently as during 1944-45 such attitudes and reactions of the people were noticed, after a severe famine in

Bengal in 1943 (Mukherjee 1944, Chattopadhyay and Mukherjee 1946). So where these refugee-units should be settled and in what manner should they be provided with employment would have to be planned in the light of their present ways of life and their cherished future "expectations".

That way it appears that either they should be settled within the orbit of a peasant economy and the rural life or within the orbit of such an urban economy that the way of life proposed for them would not be totally foreign to what they have been used to so far. But there, again, they cannot be put under *any one* of these two economic organizations indiscriminately. For the activities directly related to, or ancillary to, the agrarian economy and the rural social organization may attract a big chunk of them; whereas, in view of their contact with the metropolis in the last few years, the rest may prefer an urban social organization and an urban economy.

So that a large number of those belonging to the platform segment of the Calcutta refugees may be settled in the former way as they nourish the hope of becoming peasants again. And a number of hovel-dwellers would follow in their wake as they also have not given up that hope. But any force applied to the others to rehabilitate them accordingly may merely prompt them to run away from such settlements and resume drifting again.

The presently-sponsored rehabilitation programmes like the Dandyakaranya Project of the Government of India—whereby the refugees are being settled on land in a completely new ecological setting—should therefore give priority to accord that kind of facility to the relevant refugee-units only, and not be meant for all and sundry as is reported to be the case *vis-a-vis* the refugees in Government camps and elsewhere.

To be sure, India's present potentiality cannot adopt this solution universally and unequivocally, even if it were *the* solution prescribed for *all* the refugees. And, contextually, one should emphasize the point that to arrange for the settlement of the refugees on the basis of a peasant economy by exhorting them to adopt this life instead of making a careful selection out of them for the purpose would only lead to the misuse of such a measure relevant and vital to the future of a number of them.

As for the others in either or both these segments of the Calcutta refugees, their present experiences in Calcutta (however painful it may have been to acquire them) have made them amenable to settlement at the fringe of or within the urban sector of India's economy on the basis of jobs, commercial facilities, etc., as are commensurate with their education, aptitude, and technical knowledge. However, to rehabilitate them accordingly, two problems would require immediate solution.

The first one refers to unemployment of the able-bodied male workers among these displaced persons. The problem, of course, is not restricted to the platform and the hovel segments of Calcutta refugees. Their colony and city segments also exhibit a similarly serious situation (Table 24). But as the two latter segments are

Table 24

Current and potential number of earners of the refugee-units		Platform sample	Hovel sample	Colony sample	City sample	Total
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Number of gainfully employed persons in a unit	None	9	3	—	1	13
	1	33	40	37	36	146
	2	10	9	8	5	32
	3 or more	—	2	8	6	16
Total number of units		52	54	58	41	207
Number of able-bodied male workers of age 21-55 years in a unit	None	3	1	—	—	4
	1	16	14	2	5	37
	2	29	31	23	22	105
	3 or more	4	8	28	21	61
Total number of units		52	54	53	48	207
Average size of the units		4.6	4.9	6.4	6.4	5.6
Percentage of gainfully employed to the total refugees in the sample		22	24	24	23	23

already merged in the social ecology of Calcutta or are undergoing that process at the moment, this phenomenon does no more appear as a specifically "refugee problem" in their respect. For the Calcutta society *en bloc* is concerned with the problem for a long time. So, as an endemic issue, its repercussions may undermine the vitality of society but it cannot disrupt social harmony or the integration of society in respect of its constituents—family-wise, or in terms of any other form of societal grouping.

Contrariwise, unless proper attention is given to resolve this issue when settling the relevant hovel and platform dwellers in a new environment, serious tension may generate within and between the refugee-units on account of the relative prosperity effected among them thereby. ✓ And that tension, generated at the beginning of the attempt, may cause irreparable harm to the process of building a community life, if not putting a stop to the process altogether. ✓

Therefore, the provision of employment in respect of the relevant refugee-units living in hovels or on the railway platforms would have to be thought of in terms of the number of able-bodied workers concerned and not merely in terms of the number of refugee-units involved ; a point which is often ignored when suggesting programmes for their rehabilitation.

The second problem that has to be faced in the same context refers to the kind of jobs that may be selected and/or created for these refugees within or at the fringe of the urban economy. Because it is imperative that the various forms of employment provided to them should not be such that these would affect, immediately and drastically, the tempo and the organization of work they have been used to all along.

While living under the rural economic organization either in East Pakistan or in Indian villages, most of them were used to work on a job-basis and not on the basis of any scheduled time of work. And such an accounting of their labour has so far been the dominant note in their way of life in Calcutta as well, in contrast to the accounting of labour (almost invariably on a monthly basis) of the workers belonging to the colony and the city segments of Calcutta refugees (Table 25).

Table 25

Mode of payment to the gainfully employed persons among the Calcutta refugees	Number of persons concerned				
	Platform sample	Hovel sample	Colony sample	City sample	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Job-basis (contract)	20	25	—	1	46
Daily basis	23	23	2	—	48
Weekly basis	—	1	—	—	1
Monthly basis	10	16	81	68	175
Total	53	65	83	69	270



For instance, as in their previous homeland and so in Calcutta, if one of the hovel or platform dwellers was a carpenter he usually worked on the basis of a particular assignment, such as making a chair, a table, an almirah, etc. For this he was to be paid an agreed sum; his contract with the employer being so stipulated that the work would have to be completed within so many days. But there would be no binding on the craftsman as how he would organize his labour on that account.

Similarly, while accepting any job on the daily basis, it was not infrequently found that these displaced persons were to be employed for the "day" and not by fixed hours. And so, as a corollary to that kind of employment, their employers would seldom be able to take any step if the workers were absent from work for a day or two, virtually as and when they felt like.

Furthermore, even if these refugees had set up shops or "factories" for production, they would not work there for regular hours or for a specific number of days in a week, and so on. That is, in whichever way they may be earning their livelihood, any arrangement for regular hours of work within fixed time-periods and on everyday in the week (except Sunday) would involve these people with such conditions as they were neither used to in the past nor have been trained to undertake at present.

Evidently, this feature in the life of these people represents a hangover from the rural economic organization they were participants of. But such habits die hard; and, in any case, it is a time consuming process. It is likely, therefore, that finding such occupations for them as primary workers in large-scale manufacturing industries or in handicraft centres, etc., which follow strictly the urban tempo and organization of work, would not immediately help them to strike roots in any ecological setting.

This has been our common experience since the "East Pakistan refugee problem" began to haunt Indian society. Namely, even after finding "satisfactory" employment, a large number of the workers concerned were found to drift away after a while, and look for other much less remunerative but "congenial" occupations. They have thus earned the epithet of being indolent and pathologically ineffective to social adjustment. But such characterizations, made

by persons who are genuinely interested in their welfare and so have become frustrated in that attempt, merely substantiate the crucial point that we have failed so far to appreciate one of the major *soft spots* in the way of life of these people.

What would be necessary, therefore, in their respect is to pave the way towards their eventual assimilation in the larger society through such jobs and enterprises as can be at the moment in the *no man's land* between the rural and urban economic organization. This would provide a suitable bridge for them to cross in order to stabilize their future life within the urban social organization and the urban economy.

This, no doubt, is a tall order. But it is not impossible of execution. For in the spectrum of rural-urban continuum of occupational profiles and the economic organization of India, such employment can be selected or designed as would require the labour of these people (for some time, at any rate) job-wise and not hour-wise.

In any case, unless such a distinct and long-drawn process of rehabilitation can be designed and pursued for these people, it would be difficult to establish them in society,—securely and permanently.—For force may forbid them from returning to the railway station or its surrounding area in Calcutta; but as a cancerous growth within the social organism, they would go on making sporadic eruptions in the society and disrupt social harmony through anti-social activities for having no societal moorings.

## VIII

This has been our experience to date. Purely by the process of trial and error, some refugees from East Pakistan (a large number, no doubt) have been absorbed in India society. Still an appreciable number of them is causing concern to the Government and the public. They may represent the difficult cases, attaining the status of chronic ailment through the long course of our

failure to understand their soft spots which could not be fortuitously attended to by the spontaneously evolved measures of rehabilitation. Particularly in their case, therefore, the future course of treatment will have to be administered through correct and specific diagnoses.

The present discussion is an attempt in this context, but with reference to the refugees in Calcutta specifically. Nevertheless, its approach and the findings may be found applicable also to the other sectors of the current refugee population in India. And the model of analysis adopted for this study in reference to the respectively homogeneous segmentation of the "universe" of Calcutta refugees, the course of evolution of these segments to date, and the soft spots they exhibit thereby, may be found useful of application to the study of minority/marginal groups elsewhere, having the aim of their assimilation in the *milieu*.

Furthermore, from the above illustrative diagnosis, the following general conclusions can be drawn :

One, for the group under reference the fulfilment of the economic needs of its constituents comes up as the cardinal factor in solving its problems ; and this is further substantiated by the fact that practically all the displaced persons in rural areas of West Bengal who have settled down as peasants or their associates do no more declare themselves as "refugees". But merely to state the situation as such would have been inadequate for the group. Because, although a large number of the displaced persons have been rehabilitated satisfactorily within the sphere of the rural economy, their intra-group variations indicate that this cannot be accepted as the blanket solution for all belonging to it. On the contrary, such variations lead us to diagnose different soft spots in the organism for respective segments, and suggest accordingly different measures to solve their problems. Analogous situations may be found with respect to other varieties of groups in a society ; confirming the specific usefulness of studies like the present one.

Two, while the economic basis of the group under reference was found to demand primary attention to solve its problems, this need not be true in all cases. Specific "value considerations" (in the sense this phrase has been employed in this chapter) or other societal attributes may come up as requiring primary

attention in some other cases. But for all such cases the fact would remain that whichever may be the cardinal factor or factors in specific contexts, it or they would not be revealed without examining intra-group variations like the above and identifying the soft spots in the social organism accordingly. This, therefore, would be the particular usefulness of studies like the present one.

Three, the manner in which attention was focussed on the group under reference in order to identify its soft spots may have a general application. For it may be useful in pointing towards the reactions of a people to a course of induced change, whereby any planned programme of social development could be efficiently designed and properly implemented.<sup>5</sup> This, therefore, should be regarded as the general usefulness of studies like the present one.

Summarily, the discussion in this chapter illustrates how to focus one's attention with a view to ascertain and or effect social change in any organism <sup>6</sup>

## NOTES

1. I am indebted to my colleagues Suraj Bandyopadhyay and Kumarananda Chattopadhyay for their help in preparing this chapter, and for taking complete charge of the field investigation and the analysis of the data collected thereby on which the present discussion is based.

2 According to official figures, 3.14 million persons came as "refugees" from East Pakistan to West Bengal during 1947—61; and out of this number, 2.23 millions settled down in this State, while 0.18 millions settled down outside West Bengal. Of the remaining 0.73 million persons, 0.05 millions could be accounted for as inmates of Government Refugee Camps and Refugee Homes; the rest 0.68 millions remain untraced. (cf. CMRDP 1954 : 46, SSB 1951, 1955 : 41).

A sample survey, conducted under my guidance in 1960-61 in order to study changes in family structures in West Bengal, found that out of 103 family and non-familial units in 20 sampled villages, which have come from East Pakistan since the "partition", only 2 family-units declared themselves as "refugees". The corresponding numbers for 5 sampled urban areas (including Howrah city) and Calcutta were 231 and 53, and 251 and 97, respectively. The study was sponsored by the Research Programmes Committee of the Planning Commission, Government of India.

3. The survey conducted under my guidance by the two colleagues mentioned in Note 1 involved intensive interrogation of 52 refugee families squatting on the platforms of Sealdah Railway Station, 54 sampled families living in the "hovels", 53 sampled families living in "refugee colonies", and the total number of 48 out of 795 sampled families resident in other areas of Calcutta who declared themselves as "refugees". A report on this study remains yet unpublished, which discusses the validity of the sample design adopted for the survey.

It may, however, be pointed out here that although the total sample of only 207 refugee-units may appear to be too small for the

purpose of drawing reliable deductions therefrom, the apprehension would be unfounded. Because, commensurate with the objective of the study, the total sample was almost equally distributed among the four segments of the Calcutta refugees, and the concept of these four segments as employed in the sample design was substantiated from field investigation to conform to the real state of affairs. This will be seen from the tables in this chapter. For in terms of any course of behaviour or any set of their classificatory characteristics, the refugee-units are found to cluster by four segments, respectively, or by the pooling together of the allied segments into two mutually distinct homogeneous blocks.

It may also be mentioned here that while the full report on this study has not been published yet, a paper based on its major findings was communicated to the Fifth World Congress of Sociology, held in Washington, D C, U.S A., in September 1962, and is published in their *Transactions* (vide, Mukherjee-1964 : 157-158).

✓4 Referring to migrations from East and West Pakistan, respectively, it was written (MOR 1957 · 5) :

“The two major differences in the two migrations are, firstly that the exodus from East Pakistan has not ceased and thousands of migrants are still entering this country for relief and rehabilitation, and secondly, that the influx from East Pakistan to India has not been balanced by a corresponding efflux from India into Pakistan. The Displaced Persons from West Pakistan were absorbed much more rapidly, because, to some extent, a vacuum had been created by the departure of Muslims. In the eastern region there is no such vacuum, and the government has been faced with a monumental task of fitting those millions of displaced persons into an area which is almost saturated, both from the point of view of population and from the point of view of employment. This feature of rehabilitation in the Eastern Zone is reflected in the nature of arrangements which have had to be made to deal with the problem.”

5. Thus in countries like India where the Government has adopted the policy of a planned development of society controversies are there as to whether a course of development can be induced

directly through specific "action programmes" or it would have to be left to the indirect process of sustained economic betterment and general education of the people ✓ In such a context, studies like the present one may indicate (or, at any rate, suggest further course of research to point out) whether specific "action programmes" would be relevant, and, if relevant, how best could they be launched.

6. It will be noticed that in this chapter the "platform" and the "hovel" segments of the Calcutta refugees have been described mostly in the past tense, the "colony" and the "city" segments in the present. This is because when the field investigation was carried out in January 1962 all the four segments of the Calcutta refugees were functioning in the society of Calcutta. But, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, in January 1964 the Bengal Refugee Service (an international philanthropic organization) arranged to settle the "platform" and the "hovel" refugees outside Calcutta and undertook sustained measures to rehabilitate them there fully and satisfactorily. So that, at the moment, there are no such persons among the Calcutta refugees who can be said to belong to these two segments.

The discussion about these two segments of the Calcutta refugees, however, would maintain its topical relevance (apart from meeting the objective of writing this chapter as an illustrative diagnosis of *soft spots* in a social organism). Because, in due course, a critical evaluation may be made of these people in order to ascertain the extent to which the commendable "action programme" launched by the Bengal Refugee Service has proved successful.





# Orientation To Contemporary Situation

## RURAL SHIFTS AND VILLAGE STUDIES IN INDIA

### I

Given the correct focus or foci of attention to identify the soft spots in a social organism, the question that confronts us next can be formulated as . What should be our orientation to the proposed study in order to detect the pattern of "differences" emerging within a social *milieu* in course of the life pulsating therein ? The need for such an orientation has been indicated in the last chapter. For Chapter 5 has shown that the soft spots in the organization of the Calcutta refugees could not be detected unless our attention was focussed *equally* on their economic, social and ideological characteristics.

This may, however, appear as an obvious fact. All the same, it is worthy of note that such an obvious fact is not always (and indeed seldom) elicited in respect of a society under examination ; and that remains as a serious limitation to our appreciation of the social forces

For instance, it was recently stated by a top-ranking economist and planner of India that while irrigation projects have been successfully executed in many parts of India, the people are not seen to utilize the available facility fully or satisfactorily; although it is obvious that the people there are badly in need of water in order to trans-form their "culturable waste" into arable fields. Now, is this an

"economic" problem, a "social" problem, or both, or what else? An answer to such a question would evidently be of supreme practical importance to India today, and its theoretical implication also should not be lost sight of.

In several other aspects also it has been noticed that the life and living of our people cannot be interpreted purely on "economic" or on "social" terms, while both of them have their specific significance (*vide*, Bandyopadhyay and Chattopadhyay 1963, Chattopadhyay and Bandyopadhyay 1963(a), 1963(b) · Mukherjee and Bandyopadhyay 1964 ; etc ). Of course, the comment would possibly be there that this also is nothing new to us. But, again, the retort has to be made then : Have we understood the "obvious" as yet ?

For example, why is it so that :

"One of the most common arguments put forward by cultivators reluctant to use chemical fertilisers in spite of knowledge of their favourable effect on yield, is that once they apply it to their land, they will have to go on using it every year and enter into a commitment of cash expenditure" (Bhattacharjee 1964 . 118).

Or, why is it so that :

"A study of the programme for improved seed by the Programme Evaluation Organization revealed that nearly 38 per cent of the sample farmers showed first preference for self-supply in the matter of procuring improved seed. No other sources of supply received as high a preference. The figures for some of the States showed as high a proportion as 83 per cent of the cultivators preferring their own supply of improved seed to dependence on institutional agencies. This is, however, not a rigid resistance to the infiltration of the money economy as far as purchase and outflow of cash are concerned; it is more of a suspicion and a fear that leads to an attitude of trial and error and postponement of the decision for some time." (*ibid.*)

In such a situation, a sympbiotic expression of the economic, social and ideological aspects of the life and living of the people requires investigation; and a methodology can be evolved accordingly, as has been pointed out elsewhere (*vide*, Mukherjee and Bandyopadhyay 1964). For only that way we may be able to elicit the

nature and the extent of "differences" emerging within a social *milieu* in their correct perspective.

Now this consideration brought within the purview of the present discussion refers to a distinct orientation of our researches in order to appreciate the "what", "how" and "why" of the social changes taking place within an organism. Pursuantly, after an illustration of how to focus our attention on the social organism so as to diagnose its soft spots in reference to our objective to study "social change", the question comes up: What are the kinds and patterns of "differences" within a society that we should be looking for, and what should be our orientation to the study accordingly?

Such an orientation, as will be realized from the discussion in this chapter, is sometimes noticed in the case of small-scale investigations covering a limited field of observation. But in a larger sphere of investigation it often gets lost. In an all-India perspective, therefore, I shall take up the question in this chapter in reference to rural shifts and orientation to village studies

This issue I shall discuss in a chronological order, ascertaining first why village studies were taken up by social scientists in India and how, and in what manner, this branch of research developed thereafter. For that way we should be able to expose the lacunae of our understanding of the rural society in bold relief.

The chapter, of course, can serve an illustrative purpose only, like all other chapters in this book. Nevertheless, I expect that the discussion it contains will fall in line with the central theme of this part of the book. Because, that a comprehensive appreciation of "village India" is the call of the hour (since the centre of gravity of our society lies therein) is accepted by virtually all sociologists in India—ancient or modern.

The deterioration in India's rural economy, set in a century earlier and spreading insidiously over the sub-continent because of the lack of effective checks (Dutt 1950), came up clearly on the surface from the beginning of the present century. The end of the

First World War unveiled the abject poverty, squalor, and disorganization of village societies, the rumbling of rural discontent began to reach the ears of the Government and the educated public in towns and cities.

The Government had to take a serious note of the imminent agrarian crisis, leading to the appointment of the first Royal Commission on Agriculture in 1926. Sympathetic private bodies and individuals also became interested, rendering a political and/or economic slant to the situation.

It was in this critical phase of India's history that "village studies", in the sense the label is employed today, took its birth in order that facts and figures could be gathered for an objective understanding of how the rural folks live, what are their wants, and why are they obliged to lead a sub-human existence

Contextually, the Indian National Movement played a significant role. For one of its fruitful bye-products was to create interest of the social scientists in "village studies". The mass movement of 1920-s, led by Gandhi and based essentially on the rural question, synchronized with series of "village studies" carried out in different parts of India. Patel has succinctly summarized the situation.

"With the end of the First World War, the beginning of an agrarian crisis was accompanied by the entry of peasant into the political arena, as exemplified during the Champaran and Kaira Campaigns led by Gandhi. As a result, the cultivator of the soil began to attract considerable attention from students of Indian society G. Keatings and Harold Mann in Bombay, Gilbert Slater in Madras, and E. V. Lucas in the Punjab, initiated intensive studies of particular villages and general Agricultural problems. The results of these investigations evoked great interest and stressed the necessity for still further study." (Patel 1952 : 1).

In 1930-s, many more scientists, administrators, and politically imbued social workers joined forces. "Village studies" began to be carried out extensively all over India by organizations and individuals.

The Punjab Board of Economic Enquiry went on organizing village surveys conducted by individual workers (since 1920-s).

The Bengal Board of Economic Enquiry was set up and it undertook village surveys (1935), some in collaboration with the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta (Chakravarti 1937). Tagore's Visva-Bharati organized village surveys around Santiniketan, Bengal, under the auspices of the Visva-Bharati Rural Reconstruction Board and at the individual initiative of Sri Kali Mohan Ghosh (data partly processed in Mukherjee and Mukherjee 1946, Mukherjee 1957; etc). Professors Bhattacharya and Natesan of Scottish Church College, Calcutta, published accounts of village life in Bengal as collected by their students from respective villages (1932). The same was done by Professors Thomas and Ramakrishnan of Madras University (1940) with reference to the south Indian villages previously surveyed under the guidance of Gilbert Slater. The Cochin State published accounts of individual villages under the authorship of T. K. Sankara Menon (1935). Subramanian published the survey of a south Indian village under the auspices of the Congress Economic and Political Studies (1936). Gujarat Vidyapeeth persuaded Professor J. C. Kumarappa to undertake the survey of Matar Taluka in Gujarat (1931); and his work synchronized or was followed by those of G. C. Mukhtyar (1930), J. B. Shukla (1937), and others in Gujarat. Village surveys were also taken up in Maharashtra by the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona (Gadgil and Gadgil 1940, and others). And so it went on with studies undertaken by organizations and by individuals themselves (cf. Deshpande and Ghurye 1927; Aiyar 1952; etc.).

Significantly, for these studies the field under focus was the economic life of the people; so that the pressing problems of rural society could be exposed in bold relief. Slater, one of the pioneers in "village studies" in India, wrote in his introduction to the study of "Some South Indian Villages".

Villages came before towns, and even in the most industrialized countries, where all economic questions tend to be studied from an urban point of view, it is well to be reminded that the economic life of a town or city cannot be understood without reference to the lands which send its food and raw materials, and the villages from which it attracts young men and women. The importance of rural activities and of village life in India, in view of the enormous

preponderance of its agricultural population over that engaged in mining, manufacture, commerce and transport, is not likely to be overlooked; and least of all in Southern India, which has no coal mines and no great industries like cotton manufacture in Bombay and jute in Bengal" (Slater 1918 : 1)

Mann wrote in the Preface to his second study of a Deccan village.

"The study of rural conditions by close inquiry into the circumstances of a single unit, be it village, parish, or estate, has come to the front prominently in recent years as a method of social and economic investigation. And by the use of this method, if the villages to be studied are well chosen, a very much more intimate acquaintance with the actual conditions of life than by any other method can be obtained." (Mann and Kanitkar 1921 : iii).

Kalelkar wrote in his introduction to J. C. Kumarappa's "An Economic Survey of Matar Taluka".

"If there is one thing that characterises the educated man in India and distinguishes him from his confederate elsewhere, it is his abysmal ignorance of the actual rural conditions in his own country. There are some people who are anxious to see India industrialized. There are others who will be content if India got back her own. But neither of them have secured the bed rock of statistics collected from the mouths of the peasants themselves. The present survey is unique in this respect." (Kumarappa 1931 : VII).

Economics and material well-being of the rural folks had thus become the preoccupation with those undertaking "village studies", as the situation then dictated.

In 1940-s also the orientation of the social scientists towards "village studies" remained virtually the same as before. Only it could be noticed that henceforth they began to launch *extensive enquiries* by covering large tracts in the light of the picture of rural society already built up by means of the ever-increasing numbers of isolated "village studies". Concurrently, they were often found to concentrate on specific aspects of the "rural problem" in a particular area.

Thus the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, undertook series of sample survey of Bengal villages in order to ascertain the effects of the 1943 famine on rural society (Mahalanobis *et al* 1946), to estimate the extent of rural indebtedness or to portray the condition of agricultural labourers in society (Indian Statistical Institute 1948), and so on. Other organizations also made similar attempts, the details of which are not of immediate concern (e.g., Iyenger 1951).

Likewise, the Government Departments, Central and Provincial, undertook extensive studies, such as the Agricultural Labour Enquiry of the Ministry of Labour, Government of India, since 1948 (published from 1954 onwards). And individuals also contributed their mite in this venture. For example, Sayana of the Bombay School of Economics and Sociology undertook sample survey of Telegu-speaking districts of the Madras Province, along with the collation of relevant data from official and non-official sources, in order to study the "Agrarian Problem of Madras Province" (Sayana 1949).

The up-shot was that by 1950 the minimum of basic knowledge had been accumulated, at any rate, to attempt estimating the national income of rural India with reasonable precision, to formulate plans and programmes for India's rural development, and to sponsor studies on an all-India scale for the planned development of India in the future.

This is evident from the reports of the National Income Committee set up by the Government of India in 1949 (e.g., *The First Report* 1951), from the precise formulations of rural economic problems in the *plans* propagated by the Government of India or private bodies, from the inauguration of the Government of India National Sample Survey in 1950 (viz. *General Report No. 1*, 1952), etc., etc.

### III

This course of development and outcome of "village studies" meets evidently an important need of the country and the government. So it may not be fortuitous that from a different ulterior

motive it was brought up by the British East India Company as early as in 1689.

Those were the days when the Directors of the Company were becoming interested in controlling the land and the people in India instead of indulging in mere trading activities along with contemporary European and Indian rivals. Pursuantly, they wrote to their agents in India :

“The increase of our revenue is the subject of our care, as much as our trade — ’tis that must maintain our force, when twenty accidents may interrupt our trade, ’tis that must make us a nation in India, — without that we are but as a great number of interlopers, united by his Majesty’s royal charter, fit only to trade where nobody of power thinks it their interest to prevent us ; — and upon this account it is that the wise Dutch, in all their general advices which we have seen, write ten paragraphs concerning their government, their civil and military policy, warfare, and the increase of their revenue, for one paragraph they write concerning trade”  
(Quoted by Mill 1858 i, 87-88)

In the present context, the aspirations of the East India Company for political power over India, as narrated elsewhere (Mukherjee 1958 a), do not concern us. What, however, would be of interest to note is that after the futile attempt of the Company in this direction at the end of the seventeenth century the successful attempts made since the middle of the eighteenth were followed by increasing awareness of the foreign power to know more and more about the life and living in the sub-continent. Because, for good or bad, for the welfare of the people or for the exploitation of the masses, it is necessary to know at the outset how the society is organized and how the people live.

Here, therefore, we need not dwell upon the policy which sponsored from the beginning of the nineteenth century the extensive (although sketchy) collection of information on how the Indian people live in villages. Such as the Company’s requisition of the services of Dr. Francis Buchanan from 1800 in order to report on the conditions in towns and villages in Madras, Mysore, Bihar, Bengal, etc. (cf. Buchanan-Hamilton 1807 ; Baden-Powell 1872, 1899 ; etc.).



We need not also refer to the genuine interest in the welfare of the people which prompted a number of foreign administrators and scientists to undertake relevant investigations in villages and in broader regions, mainly from the beginning of the twentieth century. Such as the study of a British administrator in India on the economic life of a Bengal district (Faridpur) in the first decade of the present century which he undertook on his own initiative and as a labour of love (cf Jack 1916, Stevenson-Moore 1898, etc.).

What we must note, instead, is that infrequent and usually a generalized version of the situation as they were, these efforts built the monumental gate-way to the path of development of "village studies" in India.

The path, however, remained narrow and not yet fully reinforced even after several decades of conducting "village studies". Because in all these days engrossing attention was showered on rural "economics". A change in the depth of focus of the pictures emerging from the investigations was therefore called for.

Namely, to the pioneers in the field the individuals and the social groups were living entities with reference to the economic activities they were engaged in. The *institutional* approach, in the sense it endeavours to portray the "organized, purposeful system of human effort and achievement" (Malinowski 1944: 51), was possibly not deliberate. It was spontaneous as one might expect in unsophisticated keen observers. But in the course of development of "village studies" during 1920—50 the emphasis was laid increasingly on purely economic categorization of rural society, and even the *social relations* which the villagers had evolved with reference to their economic organization were not attended to properly or at all.

Such as the number of gainfully occupied persons in a village, their affiliation to respective sectors of the national economy (as agriculture, handicraft productions, etc.), the type of job they performed (such as non-manual or skilled manual occupation, etc.), and their activity status (as employer, employee, own-account worker) were the usual subject-matter for analysis. But the bearing of the presence of these individuals in society in terms of the relations which had emerged among themselves on account of their work and earnings, the relations which had crystallized within and between the societal groups incorporating

one or the other of these persons, and such other facets of social relations evolving out of the economic organization of society were hardly touched upon

Or, the income distribution, landholding, the expenditure pattern, and such other economic attributes of the villagers were often treated in meticulous details ; but the social relations the rural folks had developed with respect to such economic attributes were, almost invariably, lost sight of. Similar examples may be cited in numbers

As a result, even in terms of only such organized, purposeful systems of human effort and achievement as refer to the economic sphere of society not enough has been learnt so far as how the relevant individuals, the co-resident and commensal kingroups (viz. residential family-units), the kingroups of larger dimensions, or other varieties of societal units characterized by the involuntary and voluntary groupings of the villagers are integrated with one another with reference to the economic appellations of their constituent members.

Indeed, we know very little today about the structural and functional alignments in village society consequent to the economic activities of the people, not to speak of other aspects of their life. For the preoccupation of the social scientists with the "economics" of rural society, which became more and more pronounced since 1940-s, began to push the living persons in the background ; and instead of presenting the villagers as *social beings* presented them (with increasingly finer precision, no doubt) as abstract economic and statistical categories.

#### IV

To be sure, there was, there is, and there will remain the need for such specialized studies. But equally, it began to be felt, there is the need to take up "village studies" from *another* perspective ; the perspective formulated and interpreted by cultural and social anthropologists and sociologists in contradistinction to that evolved by the economists from an earlier period,

This felt-need began to be satisfied by the publications coming out since 1950-s. The late Professor Majumdar, one of those who undertook the task, had aptly described the situation.

"Of late, in India, we have a spate of literature on our rural life. Some have been written by foreign scholars, some by Indians. Some of these studies have been monographically oriented, as for example, Srinivas's "Mysore Village" Or Dube's "Indian Village". Some are problem oriented, as one discovers in the various anthologies published in anthropological or social science journals or in the *Economic Weekly*. The West Bengal Government has published a volume of essays on Indian village life and problems edited by M. N. Srinivas. McKim Marriott has edited a series of articles on Indian rural life, under the title *Village India*, while the Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society, Uttar Pradesh, has published a volume on *Rural Profiles*, the first of a series of village studies. All these indicate the interest the anthropologists are taking in rural assignments. Some of these studies are intimate, intensive and competent, some are superficial; and no doubt, some have raised our expectations, for they have focussed attention on the many problems of rural life which demand priority in the context of the planning for the countryside, which is the avowed goal of our planners" (Majumdar 1958 : 326-327).

It is not my contention to comment on the writings of individual anthropologists and sociologists who have thus given a *new look* to "village studies". Obviously, at the initial stage of such a venture there would be some hasty generalizations, occasionally narrow specialization, or, infrequently, dogmatic adherence to an intriguing concept. But these are minor blemishes on the edifice that is being built by this attempt, an edifice which will serve the purpose of presenting, eventually, a balanced view of the forces at work in rural society and a harmonious picture of the course of life pulsating therein.

I thus comment on the lack of a balanced view of the dynamics of rural society and on the incomplete picture of rural life we are presented with even after this new venture. And I note, concurrently, that this will have to be achieved. There is an important reason for subscribing to this viewpoint,

Namely, although most of the studies falling under the recently sponsored scheme are of substantial worth, they swing to specialization similar to those of contemporary economists but at the other extreme. The twain do not meet. Or they meet seldom, and there again in most instances inconsequentially. A composite picture of rural society has, therefore, yet to be exposed.

Thus, with reference to the same subject as "village study", an economist may be found to dwell on the theme of "proletarianization" of the mass of villagers as indicative of the dominant phenomenon in rural society. Whereas a social anthropologist would be complementarily concentrating his attention on the role of dominant caste in a village, on casteization or sanskritization of the rural folk, etc.

Is there a link between the two processes or are they independent of each other? And if a link is there, what does it stand for *vis-a-vis* the dynamics of rural society? Would it not be useful to explore that link for a harmonious picture of the life pulsating in a village?

In the same way as for the above example, with respect to village as an entity the economist may speak of "closed" versus "vulnerable" economy and elucidate the concept by pointing out "sub-marginal" productive and service enterprises in a "self-subsisting economy" (cf. Mukherjee, P. K. 1959). The social anthropologist or sociologist, on the other hand, may treat the village as a unit hierarchically structured and may elucidate rural life as a "concept" based on kinship ties, castewise integration, and the jajmani system. But is it not possible to combine the two aspects of rural society and obtain thereby a fuller understanding of the course of life therein?

Similarly, an economist interested in the social accounting of a village may discuss the problem of evaluation of "non-monetary income and outgoings in family-household enterprises" (cf. Mukherjee, P.K. and Gupta 1959). While a social anthropologist or sociologist who considers the village as a "constellation of values" may elaborate on the particular value system of rural folks, on the concepts of parochialization versus universalization, etc. But, again, would not the superimposition of these two facets of rural life yield a better harvest?

Or, both being concerned with explaining current changes in village society, an economist may point out the growing phenomenon of entrepreneurship in rural areas and the emergence of a class in

village society with improved means and techniques of production and distribution, etc. Whereas a social anthropologist or sociologist may describe the content of the "urbanization process" in rural areas against the schematic formulation of *rural-urban continuum* and may ascertain the role of "village elite" in that context. But there, again, it may be desirable to bring the two sets of phenomena in focus simultaneously so as to appreciate the crucial character of the emergent leadership in rural society.

Many more instances could be cited to illustrate how even the complimentary aspects of village life are emphasized unilaterally by the economists and the social anthropologists or sociologists in two different directions, without attempts being made to link up the two equally useful lines of study. And, then, there are obviously such other aspects of village life as fall under the respective fields of specialization of an economist, a social anthropologist or a sociologist.

The upshot is that today we encounter, virtually, two different worlds of concepts and models, of analysis and interpretation, and of idioms of expression and inference concerning the same topic as "village study"

## V

No doubt, the separation and the current parallel development of these two perspectives in "village study" substantiate the fact that this branch of research has passed its stage of adolescence and has attained adulthood. So that the *social* investigation of villages may be conducted on its own merits as already accorded to the *economic* investigation of the same. For, on the one hand, both would enrich our knowledge of the social organism under reference, and, on the other, there are certain distinctly important nuances of life and living in a village which can be elicited by only one of the two approaches, respectively.

Thus, when describing the economic structure of a village, Dube concentrates his attention on the relation between the caste-affiliation and the occupation of respective villagers (Dube 1955 57f).

Thereby, he certainly departs from the no less useful procedure followed by economists, such as, the relation between landownership/utilization and occupation of the same villagers, their activity status with reference to different sectors of the national economy, etc. But the picture Dube presents by following his line of analysis is an addition to our store of knowledge regarding village societies which was lacking in the picture presented by economists, although some of them may have noted the caste affiliation of villagers as merely one of the many ways of classifying a village society or may have mentioned in passing the association of *some* castes with *certain* facets of its economic organization.

Also, while noting as above the utility of "village studies" by social anthropologists or sociologists, we may comment on the usefulness of exposing by means of relevant conceptual tools the specifically *social* characteristics of village society. Such as, the relative position of a village in the spectrum of *rural-urban continuum*; or the working of a particular process of acculturation in rural society under the labels of *sanskritization*, *parochialization*, etc., and so on.

And, concurrently, we may note the distinct importance of portraying the peculiar and specific *way of life* of a village, as Rosser has done for instance (Rosser 1960 : 77-89)

Briefly, therefore, there is no ground to denounce, or even undermine, the intrinsic merit of "village studies" usually conducted by social anthropologists and sociologists. But, all the same, the point remains that the two streams of "village studies" carrying the imprint of economists or social anthropologists/sociologists, respectively, must meet at relevant sites. Alternatively, bridges will have to be built at the places if confluence of the streams cannot be achieved.

For it is the causal or concomitant relations among *economic* and *social* (including *ideological*) traits of a people which lead to the emergence of specific societal organizations and the formulation of distinct ideological orientations of their constituent members. Also these are the relations which either maintain the current structural and functional alignments in society or engineer their respective courses of change or transformation. So that until and unless the "economic" and "social" perspectives towards "village studies" meet at critical

points, it is not possible to obtain a composite understanding of village life and a balanced view of the dynamics of village society.

Evidently, the demand may not be met in a single study unless it is an omnibus one. For we find that, justifiably, specialized studies in the economic or the social field call for respective volumes. Pursuantly, specialized investigations in the above respect also should be included in the curriculum for "village studies".

## VI

The aim, thus outlined, is not of mere academic interest to one with a squeamish taste for the *total* knowledge. This is also not the means to feed a doctrinaire because of his preoccupation with the finding of so-called "economic" motivation to each and every societal manifestation. On the contrary, it has a distinct usefulness. Because it meets one of the imperative requisites to appreciate the governing processes within a social organism by the cross-fertilization of the "economic" and the "social" factors instead of depending upon the subjective assumptions and interpretations of either of the two schools of social scientists to *fill in the gap* in this respect.

Moreover, the need for such an attempt is underlined in the context of our present-day situation, as Professor Firth had noted very forcefully more than a decade ago.

"India is beginning to learn the lesson that the price of political freedom is economic responsibility. The sympathy extended to her in her struggle for independence is needed in manifold measures now, in her struggle to abate the grinding rural poverty of so many of her people. It can hardly be denied that some solution of the pressing agrarian problem of India is crucial to the survival of her present political system. More than that, it is crucial to the survival of many of her citizens.

"Most of the books and articles about the agrarian problems of India that reach the Western reader are analyses of a general kind. They tell us of India—and leave us with a feeling of

ignorance as to just how these problems affect different groups and classes of the people in different places. They talk of economics—and leave untouched those social alignments and social values which give the economic system its meaning. Or they talk about the social background as something which simply inhibits the development of free economic enterprise and efficiency—in terms of caste taboos and sacred cows and sacred monkeys—and leave untouched the solid satisfactions to be found in the family and kinship system, in the caste associations and reliances, and even in the complex ritual evaluations of animals which share with man something of what he believes to be the divine spirit” (Firth 1952 : v).

In the light of our achievements till today as regards the *motivation to change* in rural society, the words of Professor Firth ring a topical note. For, even after half a century’s efforts to understand and appreciate village life in India, we are not certain, as yet, as to which are the *soft spots* in the social organism through which a desired course of change could be introduced in rural society :

For instance · is it the “proletarianized” rural mass and/or the *numerically* “dominant caste” placed low in the caste hierarchy which is to be the harbinger of a *new life* in villages ? Alternatively, would the charge devolve upon the landed gentry and/or the top-ranking Caste Hindus ?

Likewise, would the carriers of *new values* to rural society be the growing “rural intelligentsia” or the dumb millions who have their “education” in the hard way ? And should we go on considering, similarly, other distinctly “social” and/or distinctly “economic” groups in society in order to unravel the course of change therein ?

Or, instead of such formal and mutually distinct economic and social categorizations of the rural folk, is it a symbiosis of their various economic and social attributes which should lead us to the diagnosis of relevant soft spots in the social organism under reference ?

Evidently, in consideration of its theoretical value as well as its practical implications, a course of research in this direction has been called for since a long time. But, falling in no-man’s land between “economics” and “social anthropology or sociology” as two



different disciplines of study, its progress has been halting and hesitating. So that achievements in this line have been very little so far ; in quantity, at any rate.

From among the economists, possibly the investigations of J P. Bhattacharjee *et al* (1958) and of Baljit Singh (1961) stand out in this respect. From the other side, A C. Mayer's *Land and Society in Malabar* (1952) falls in the line , his *Caste and Kinship in Central India* (1960) is also not out of the path. *Six Villages of Bengal*, surveyed during 1941-45 and published as late as in 1958, was also a feeble venture of the present writer in this field ; leading him at a later date to discuss *The Dynamics of a Rural Society* (1957). F G. Bailey's *Caste and the Economic Frontier* (1958) is a distinct contribution in the same field , and his explorations in the wider field of *Tribe, Caste and Nation* (1960) follow therefrom.

Contextually it should be noted that some studies of social scientists in East Pakistan (formerly a part of the Indian sub-continent) also give the indication of a similar orientation. Such as of Husain as an economist (Husain 1956), and of some social anthropologists as found in the volume *Social Research In East Pakistan* edited by Pierre Bessaignet (1960).

Thus, irrespective of the relative merits of these studies, we find that attempts have been made in the desired direction in the last ten or twelve years. But such studies remain intermittent and relatively scarce. Should we not, therefore, undertake more such studies , and with, possibly, pointed relevance ?

## VII

The question may be raised at this stage of our discussion as to which of the two schools of specialists, viz. economists and social anthropologists or sociologists, should undertake the task.

This is a moot question. But it is also a question that we are facing frequently these days on other courses of social research because of the significant development of different disciplines of study under the banner of social sciences. And so a quick answer

may be provided as that inter-disciplinary research in the fields of economics, social anthropology and sociology, and psychology is the *sine qua non* of the present-day position of "village studies", just as it is with respect to almost all other aspects of the study of social beings.

But the answer, however perfect, may not be the most practicable one; in a large number of cases, at any rate. Alternatively, therefore, we may note that as the study of *group relations* evolved in a society with respect to all the activities of its constituent members falls directly under the terms of reference of social anthropology and sociology, the task should devolve upon those specializing in these subjects particularly.

Even so, the question would not be fully answered. Because we should note concurrently that if the term of reference to the economists be acclaimed as the study of relations *among* men with respect to material goods and services instead of as that between man *and* material goods and services (Sweezy 1956 : 4-5), they could not also be exempted from shouldering the burden. And if the psychologists are not to indulge in researches on human beings in a rarified "personal" situation only, they would also have to accept the responsibility equally with economists, social anthropologists, and sociologists.

Thus the frontiers of the three disciplines do meet in the field of "village study", and so scientists duly equipped to cross the no-man's land between the disciplines should also be forthcoming.

The question therefore does not boil down to which discipline should undertake the task or that it can be accomplished only by inter-disciplinary research. Contrariwise, the question throws up the challenge to create interest among those belonging to any one of the disciplines to assume the responsibility and equip themselves accordingly.

So that, where the necessary facilities are available, inter-disciplinary research may be undertaken for this course of "village study". And if such facilities cannot be provided with, as it is likely in many instances, duly-equipped scientists from any one of the disciplines must undertake the task as a distinct course of research.

Thereby, we shall fulfil a very important objective of social research, both theoretically and as applied to the present context of ascertaining "social change" in India from contemporary situations.

# Orientation For Depth Analysis

## ROLE OF TRADITION IN SOCIAL CHANGE

### I

I have tried to substantiate the fact in the last chapter that proper orientation to the contemporary situation can present us with a pattern of "differences" within a social milieu in its true perspective; and that, on an immediate footing, such differences may be correctly interpreted as "change". However, such an immediate footing is seldom obtained in course of an investigation on "social change". Indeed, even when dealing with a topical phenomenon as discussed in Chapter 5 it was seen that the soft spots in the organization of the Calcutta refugees could not be indentified unless we projected our attention backwards and thereby ascertained the *static points* with reference to which the patterns of "differences" observed in their present-day life could be interpreted adequately.

An orientation for depth analysis in order to ascertain the static point or points for departure therefrom thus becomes a prime requirement of social research in connection with the proposed appraisal of "social change".

This, however, may not appear as a novelty to research workers; especially (as noted above) with respect to small-scale investigations or problems which are of immediate occurrence. For the construction of the immediately past history of a group of people is not a difficult

task ; also their current state of affairs may enforce such a construction in order that the research worker may give a satisfactory rendering of the present situation.

Where, however, we are dealing with a larger sphere of investigation or with problems deep-rooted and endemic in a society, a specific orientation to social research becomes a matter of significant importance. For, on the one hand, the reconstruction of the past then becomes a fertile field for imagination, speculations and conjectures ; and, on the other, such a palpably unscientific procedure often leads others to denounce altogether any attempt to reconstruct the past. And in-between these two approaches, the problem remains, all the same, as how to ascertain the static point on the basis of which any "social change" can be stipulated to have occurred

For instance, it has been reported by a reputed Indian anthropologist that in the Ranchi district of Bihar the "tribals" working in the Christian Missionary Estates conform to the improved techniques of production as demanded from them , but when working in their kitchen gardens or the tiny fields which they possess themselves, they follow their traditional methods although they are well aware of the fact that the latter entail proportionately more labour and give poorer yield (*vide*, personal communication from Professor N.K Bose, formerly Director, Anthropological Survey of India, Calcutta).

Various "historical" speculations may be (and have been) made on this account. Alternatively, purely on the "non-historical" footing the explanation has been put forward that working in the Missionary Estates is a matter of "economic compulsion" for these people, whereas that in their own fields is a matter of "personal satisfaction" or mere recreation. But, either way, the differential behaviour of these people may remain unexplained

Because it is almost universally observed that within their own set-up a group of people behave logically. The logical process, of course, may be of a peculiar brand suited to them alone ; but, all the same, it has a rational basis specific to themselves. Indeed, the failure to appreciate that logic has often led us to characterize some facets in the life of a people as "historical atavism", and that has sometimes led us to pernicious conclusions. Alternatively, a scrupulous avoidance of the existence of such a logical standpoint has

often led us to plan an impractical programme for their welfare and progress.

For instance, during the British days, the former standpoint regarding the Indian peasantry led to the conclusion

"Any quickening of general political judgement, any widening of rural horizons beyond the traditional and engrossing interest of weather and water and crops and cattle, with the round of festivals and fairs and any such change from these immemorial preoccupations of the average Indian villager is bound to come very slowly indeed" (ISC 1930 : I, 15).

Alternatively, in terms of the latter standpoint adopted by some political organizations, the identification of the same class of people with the working class as representing the proletarian mass *en bloc* did more harm than good to the future well-being of these people.

For it could appear on a superficial level that because of the agrarian crisis set in India during the British rule the mass of the peasantry suffering from chronic want were eventually reduced to a position where they seemed to have had virtually "nothing to lose". Yet the fact remained concurrently that in terms of their historical antecedent they did (and still do) have significant things to loose, however impoverished they might have become in course of time.

Such as, the "sovereignty" they assert over the tiny patches of land they hold, or, even if they have lost their holdings and have turned into share-croppers or agricultural labourers, the way of life they have developed through ages in conformity with a particular organization of labour, and so on, as has been touched upon at the end of Chapter 5

Thus the pseudo-historical standpoint of the former school of thought may choke the "baby" with the bath water of unscientific speculations, while the equally irrational anti-historical standpoint of the latter may throw away the "baby" with the bath water.

The question that comes up, therefore, is how can we ascertain the logical foundation of the life of a people as we observe it currently and which points to a number of their contradictory or seemingly incongruous behaviour. For without such an explanation we cannot decide on the static point or points in reference to which any observed pattern of "differences" within a *milieu* can be interpreted as "change" or as mere "fluctuation".

This, no doubt, is a very difficult task. But surely it is not an insurmountable one. At any rate, our consistent endeavour should be there in order to orient our researches to this effect. And, therefore, I feel along with the late Professor D P Mukerji that a study of "tradition" may solve the impasse, and that this may give us a proper orientation to our task as sociologists with respect to social change in India today

To be sure, a study of tradition need not be the panacea to all our limitations in ascertaining the logical foundation in the life of a people and to locate, on that basis, the schematic static points in order to interpret any pattern of "change" within the social organism under reference. Nonetheless, that it is an important aspect of our orientation to social research in the present context, I shall try to explain in this chapter which will be concerned with the concept and the meaning of "tradition" in the Indian context.

I should also mention at the outset that the discussion I wish to initiate in the following pages will be more or less a commentary to what D. P. had first said nearly a decade ago, and which it appears to have had fallen on deaf ears so far.

## II

Nearly seven years before he died, Professor D P. Mukerji (known as D. P. to his colleagues, students and friends) spoke on *Indian Tradition and Social Change* in his Presidential Address to the First All-India Sociological Conference held in April 1955. The address was published in two volumes independently (1958 and 1961). But, to my knowledge, in spite of the extensive circle of readers it could reach thereby, the address did not receive the response it deserved. The fault was partly his own

D. P. had a way of writing which appears lucid but what he wished to convey remains hidden behind rich foliage and many offshoots. Too often, therefore, it has been complained that his writings are abstruse,—“philosophical”. Or, because of the scintillating remarks he used to make on the side, even a diligent and

conscientious reader may unintentionally misconstrue his central thought.

Such as, a top-ranking and sober sociologist in India reacted sharply to this address under the impression that D. P. wanted to develop a *science of Indian sociology* (Desai 1962). Instead, what to my understanding he wished to place before the Conference was *not* the preamble to a specific brand of Indian sociology but a plea to persuade us to realize the necessity of studying "Indian tradition" while examining social change in India today

The plea was timely. In D. P.'s words :

"If this address were to be delivered a few years ago my emphasis on the need of the study of traditions would have been much less sharp. Meanwhile, I have seen how our progressive groups have failed in the field of intellect, and hence also in economics and political actions, chiefly on account of their ignorance of and unrootedness in India's social reality" (Mukerji 1958 : 240)

"In my view, the real reason why we have not done more than what we have done through planning—and we have done none too badly—is the yet unresolved conflict between the traditions which are the principle of *dhriti*, that is, *dharma*, that which holds, maintains and continues, and the new traditions which the urban middle class have been trying to build up in the last hundred years or so. Bureaucracy is not the villain of the piece." (*ibid.* : 234-235).

It, however, we have not yet paid sufficient attention to this plea, it is because of three principal reasons. The first of them refers to our spontaneous and negative reaction to the need and feasibility of studying "Indian tradition" scientifically for any purpose whatsoever. This, therefore, is the first hurdle to be crossed in order that D. P.'s plea may be appreciated. And I feel that what would be required in this respect are (1) a clear enunciation of the usefulness of studying "tradition" in order to understand social reality; (2) a precise definition or, at any rate, a practical demarcation of the field of "Indian tradition"; and (3) the formulation of an objective frame of reference thereto as a workable (not necessarily as a final) proposition.

Accordingly, in the following pages I shall discuss these points as my first task

The second reason for our reticence to undertake studies of "Indian tradition" refers to our difference regarding the practicability and the priority of its examination in the specific context of "social change". It has thus two aspects. One is concerned with the identification and selection of such features of "Indian tradition" as we should examine in reference to the working frame adopted and in relation to social change in India today. The other aspect, then, follows as to why these facets of "Indian tradition" should be examined vis-a-vis the course of change it is desired to usher in India through the development programmes under execution

Evidently, the first of these two aspects follows from the discussion undertaken as the first task, and refers directly to the scope of D. P.'s address entitled "Indian Tradition and Social Change". The second aspect, thereafter, goes deeper into the content of D. P.'s address. Accordingly, I shall examine these two points in the above-mentioned chronological order as subsequent to the first task undertaken

Lastly, there is the most crucial point to the present discussion. It refers to the obvious fact that we do not give due importance to the study of "tradition" in the context of India's present programme for planned development. The reason behind this attitude of ours thus becomes fundamental to our appreciation of D. P.'s plea. For he himself has underlined this point in his address (*vide*, his second extract above.) Also, as further indicated by the title of his address as well as by its content, our appreciation of the *specific* and the *topical* need for studying "Indian tradition" in this context should enable us to define clearly the nature and the priority of our task as sociologists if we wish to be positively useful to society at this critical and pregnant stage of her development.

This point, therefore, I shall discuss at the end of this chapter.

The procedure adopted, however, is bound to make the chapter involved with more and more points to be taken into account as we proceed with the discussion. So there is the risk that the reader may eventually lose its thread. But the unfortunate complexity appears unavoidable in view of the inevitable ramifications



of the central issue under reference. Therefore, in order to make the situation as clear as possible under the circumstances, I should note here that I wish to treat the following questions (in the order indicated) with specific reference to D. P.'s address on "Indian Tradition and Social Change". Namely :

(1) Why study "tradition", what is "Indian tradition" and what *may be* its *workable* frame of reference ? (*vide*, Section III)

(2) What are the specific attributes of "Indian tradition" that we should examine in reference to the adopted working frame and in relation to social change in India today ? (*vide*, Section IV)

(3) Why should we study facets of "Indian tradition" vis-a-vis India's present programme for planned development ? (*vide*, Section V).

(4) Why do we not give due importance to the study of "tradition" in this context, and what shall we gain by doing so ? (*vide*, Section VI).

### III

Our experience with most of the available studies on "Indian tradition" points to their speculative and conjectural nature, at the best, to esoteric evaluation of intangibles — however logically made. Also most of these studies are written, as D. P. has caustically remarked, to provide "an argument for traditionalism *via* the need for self-respect and national vanity" (*ibid* : 241). Purposefully, therefore, we endeavour to maintain our scientific objectivity by attending to *currently* ascertainable facts only, and drawing inferences on "Indian problems" solely on that basis. But that approach has not led us very far.

In reference to one of its aspects, I have had the occasion to discuss this issue in the earlier chapters of this book. Namely, how and why our appreciation of social changes in India today remains inconsequential or fallacious because of the way we frequently handle the currently ascertainable facts. What I would like to

mention in the present context is that even after we are able to appreciate the current situation correctly and comprehensively, there would remain an allied and a bigger issue at stake. Namely, since reality is a concomitant understanding of the past and the present, how can we draw effective generalizations on social change without delving into the past ?

Some of us may question the need for such generalizations on the ground that as the past cannot be portrayed objectively there is no point in making quixotic attempts. Rigorously, therefore, they keep themselves confined to spontaneous deductions and inferences from empirical findings. Regarding such efforts, D. P. remarked "Much of empirical research in anthropology and in psychology has been rendered futile because its fields have so far been kept covered" (*ibid* : 229).

Then there are those to whom generalizations (or "throwing up bold hypotheses") on the basis of empirical findings appear as an essential demand of sociological research. They thus invite D. P.'s scathing comment on "the most jejune and vapid generalizations about Indian problems with which we are being familiarised today in the name of scientific research (*ibid* : 232).

The point remains, all the same, that unless a precise and objective method is demonstrated (or, at the least, suggested) as how to look into the past, such comments and criticisms would be futile. On this count, therefore, we should seriously examine D. P.'s suggestion to study "Indian tradition". Because, "tradition" is such a link between the past and the present that it can be examined on the *current footing*.

But there, again, a mere exposition of the need for studying "tradition" and a general statement on its methodology, in addition, may not persuade us to take up the study. Such as, to quote what D. P. himself has said in the latter respect :

"Thus it is that it is not enough for the Indian sociologist to be a sociologist. He must be an Indian first, that is, he is to share in the folk-ways, mores, customs and traditions for the purpose of understanding his social system and what lies beneath it and beyond it. He should be steeped in the Indian lore, both high and low." (*ibid* : 232-233).

One may retort to the above that D. P.'s enunciation of how to study "tradition" is vague, diffused, and all-embracing of the life-process of the Indian people. So it would deserve the same judgement that he himself has delivered on empirical findings in anthropology and psychology, on the generalizations drawn therefrom by some social scientists, and on the abstract evaluation of "traditional values" as made by the traditionalists (quoted above)

The foremost point, therefore, is to characterize and select the media (in terms of their priority to the purpose of study) through which a tradition is in operation in society. For to echo what D. P. found useful to quote in his address: "In fact it is generally when the tradition is no longer a description of an actual fact and when it has become somewhat evanescent as a rule of conduct that it most clearly justifies its name and performs its real functions" (*ibid*: 236). Hence, D. P.'s plea for our orientation may achieve its deserved force and his suggested methodology also may acquire a meaning, provided we are able to (a) ascertain the media through which tradition—"a forgotten fact", according to D. P.—is handed down to the people from generation to generation, and (b) specify thereafter the characteristics of the media on which our attention should be focussed.

The attempt, however, is offset at the very beginning with the question: What is Indian tradition? Namely, what is it something tangible and concrete—as opposed to something visionary and abstract—which is being transmitted generationally to *all* people in India or, at any rate, to their overwhelming majority?

For even a casual observer cannot fail to notice that diversity is evident in the life of the peoples of India, pointedly, in their material culture (ASI 1961). Linguistic and religious differences, distinctions in customs and institutional complexes are also obvious among the inhabitants of different parts of the sub-continent (cf. Panchanadikar 1961). Moreover, these differences are not noticed in modern times only. Take, for instance, Karnā's and Salya's vitriolic attacks, in the Mahabharata, on the customs and manners of the people belonging to the other's kingdom (Sukthankar and Belvalkar 1954. Book VIII, Chapters 27-30); or the distinction drawn in the Ramayana between the life and living in the north and the south of the Vindhya,

Yet the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are Indian epics ; read, appreciated and idealized in even remote villages *all over* India. And, more significantly, the development of many languages in India synchronized with the translation of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata in local vernaculars.

Also we find that while anti-Bengali riots may take place in Assam or DMK may flourish in South India, and the call may be broadcast to find ways and means to solve the problem of *national integration of India*, at the immediate onset of an emergency the "Indians" as constituting a category are found to stand up *en bloc*

Briefly, India is not merely a geographical mass, it is a social entity. And so there is a *prima facie* case to search for a *common base* in respect of "Indian tradition".

This base has often been interpreted in terms of Hindu religion ; with reference to the pilgrim centres strewn all over the sub-continent and thus providing the net work to bind India as a whole. But when we speak of "Indian tradition" we do not exclude the Muslims, the Christians, the Zoroastrians, etc. For our purpose, therefore, the unity expressed by the *overt practice* of one religion is not of direct importance. ~

In the same way, the unity expressed by political and administrative boundary of India would not be relevant to the present discussion. Or any such *overt* manifestation and organization of the peoples of India, as is only too evident from current events calling for the "national integration of India". Therefore, what we have to search for is the common base of "Indian tradition" in the intrinsic mechanism of the peoples' lives, in their intimate day to day living.

To be sure, there again a medium through which "Indian tradition" is in operation may not be India's copyright. It may have spilled over on to neighbouring countries or it may be found in a wider region or in countries which have undergone a similar course of social development as India. But basing upon such distinctive (not monopolistic) media for India, her tradition may have crystallized into peculiar characteristics ; or, at any rate, it may exhibit nuances peculiar to herself. It is in this respect, therefore, that we have to conduct our search for the media of "Indian tradition". ~

The search, however, has hardly begun. Basing upon contemporary data, it has been hypothesized that there are three principal dimensions of integration in the life of our people. One, the place in which an Indian is born, brought up and dies; two, the Kingroup to which a person belongs, and, three, the caste to which he is affiliated—referring equally to the caste-like appellations among the non-Hindus, as has been pointed out by many authorities (cf Gait 1902: VI, 165ff, 1911. O'Malley 1913: 495ff, 1932; Risley 1891, etc). A fourth dimension also could be mentioned, viz the linguistic-regional integration of the people. But this is, firstly, an "intra-India" dimension, whereas the other three are common to all-India. Secondly, while enlarging the scope of this paper, it may not make any significant contribution to the course of discussion other than what has already been made (cf. Panchanadikar 1961). We need not, therefore, bring to account this dimension of integration in the lives of our people.

The other three dimensions, on the other hand, would constitute a workable hypothesis. Firstly, because they refer to India as a whole; and, secondly, because such attributes of integration are common to virtually all "traditional" societies (cf McClelland 1961: 178ff). And, in the present context, therefore, its implication should be clear to us. For can these forms of integration be persistent phenomena in society unless they were crystallized and maintained by tradition?

So, to begin with, we may look for the common base of "Indian tradition" in terms of these three dimensions of integration in the life and living of the Indian people.

## IV

We are, however, not concerned with the study of "Indian tradition" *per se*. Instead, our objective is to ascertain the role of Indian tradition on social change. Only in that perspective, therefore, we should discuss the above three traditional bases in order to elucidate their respective characteristics on which our

attention should be directed. Otherwise, our study of "Indian tradition" also would become inconsequential as remarked earlier

To consider, accordingly, the traditional attachment to the place where an Indian is born, passes his life-time and dies, it is known from empirical evidence to refer essentially to villages. To an appreciable extent, it refers also to small towns; and with reference to the autochthones of large towns and cities also it is not altogether absent. But, all in all, the attachment to places of habitation is not unique to the Indian people. The Parisiennes are proud of Paris; so are the Bretons of their *villages*. The Berliners have a nostalgia for Berlin, just as the Bauern have for their respective Dorfs. And so on. Therefore, the mere fact of this kind of traditional attachment need not draw our notice.

Instead, what we are after is to examine whether the traditional attachment of our people to places of habitation has given them a parochial outlook, sustained their attitude to see only the tree for the wood, and thus has made them forget the society at large for their tiny villages, little towns, or segments of cities. Because, moulded in this manner, their inertia to the place of birth, living and death may resist the course of social change planned to be introduced as a part and parcel of the programme for India's development.

It is on this characteristic of traditional attachment of the Indian people to places of habitation that we should, therefore, focus our attention instead of forming the vision of village as "a way of life" and occasionally going a step farther to denote that life as "idyllic".

Next to consider the integration of people in terms of the kingroups they form, this also is not a feature unique to the peoples of India. But in reference to the subject under discussion, the structures and functions of kingrouping traditionally evolved in society and the consequent ideology imposed upon the people would deserve examination.

For the most important structure in this respect is the "joint family", acclaimed the traditional family organization of the Indian people. The type of this joint family organization is usually patri-virilocal; among a few, matri-utrolocal. Also there are some well-

defined groups of Indian people who form, traditionally, the nuclear family organization. But, by and large, the patri-virilocally joint family type is considered the norm of Indian family organization; and empirical investigations have tended to support this viewpoint either in terms of forming locally-functioning co-resident and commensal kingroups or in the light of maintaining the "jointedness" through concerted action and/or mental orientation of the persons concerned (cf. Desai 1964; Kapadia 1959 : 68-99; Karve 1953 : 10-15, Chapter 2 of this book, etc). So that it would be useful to examine those facets of privileges and obligations on the part of the members of a "joint family" as are commensurate with this institution but are not conducive to a progressive development of Indian society in present times

Such as, in a "joint family" the earning member or members should have the obligation to feed the rest, and the consequent privilege may be utilized by some of the dependents to lead a parasitic existence. Hence, while the situation may be accepted and tolerated in the family in terms of its traditional organization and ideology, its effect on the country's supply of labour force may be significantly adverse.

Or, when the incomes of the earners in a "joint family" are from different sources and are also sharply different in magnitudes, their common or weighted appropriation by the family *en bloc* may work against the urge of the higher income-recipients to exert themselves more to earn bigger incomes while their traditional moorings to the institution may work concurrently against their breaking away from it. And the upshot would be that affecting in the same manner as very high rate of public taxation does in a country, this would then provide a counter-leverage to greater production or better services in the society at large.

Further, the "joint family" sentiment may restrict the mobility of its constituent members, while the country's economic, territorial or social planning may demand such mobility. Or, even when obliged to move out of one's own joint family, more often than not the person concerned may graft himself on to the nuclear or the joint family-unit of a relative. The latter situation would, then, create one or more of the problems already enumerated or further complicate the course of planning; as we find, for example, in

reference to town and city planning *vis-a-vis* the workers' settlements in industrial areas or otherwise (Chattopadhyay and Bandyopadhyay 1936)

Also the ideology of the joint family system may promote the growth of population although population control may be the current requirement of society. Or it may inhibit the individual urge of the younger generation in the "modern" social setting, and so on.

Many such hypothetical instances may be cited in reference to this kind of traditional integration in the life and living of our people. Some of them are already borne out by empirical investigations. They thus support our *a priori* knowledge thereto, and tend to indicate the repercussions of these features of joint family organization and ideology on the planned programme of India's development.

Pointedly in their respects, therefore, we should examine the joint family system instead of (a) merely condemning it in general terms as anachronistic to the current course of India's social change or (b) praising it sky-high as a counterblast of such offensive remarks by stressing its supposedly remarkable content of "social insurance" and "mutual aid" programme and the unselfish, harmonious way of life established and nurtured by it in order to sustain a large number of persons at the marginal cost and expenditure of energy.

To consider, likewise, the integration of the Indian people in terms of their caste and caste-like affiliations (as found among the functional and non-functional Muslim sects, etc), the caste structure *as such* does not fall within our purview although it may appear as unique to the *ensemble* of Indian people. Because the hierarchical ordering of castes within the structure they form thereby varies from one region of India to another (cf. Panchanadikar 1961: 19-20). And as Émile Senart put it precisely: "La répartition hiérarchique de la population en classes est un fait presque universel; le régime des castes est un phénomène unique" (Senart 1927: 176). This uniqueness, therefore, is to be noticed in the superbly regimented society organised and sustained by the *caste system* whereby even today hardly any one breaks through the magic circle. (O'Malley



1932 175-176, Mukherjee 1957 102-127, Chapters 2 and 3 of this book, etc )

Aspirations to move higher up the caste ladder may be detected in present times, as before (cf. Chattopadhyay and Bandyopadhyay—in press) Also some caste principles, like sensitivity to pollution by touch or inter-dining between castes, may have lost their virulence in the current ecological setting But the fact remains, all the same, that the changes reflect adjustments *within* the confines of the caste system and not attempts to break away from the “Indian social life of bees and beavers, regimented, totalitarian, in fact, almost communistic” (Mukerji 1958 : 235) And, D. P. further commented “the beauty of it is that barring a stratum of people who repeat ‘individual values’, ‘freedom’, ‘cultural freedom’ like parrots, or who have become morbid by their very un-Indian-ness, the majority of us do *not* feel regimented” (*ibid*).

The point of contextual interest to us, therefore, is *this* aspect of caste-wise integration of the Indian people which forbids them to adopt such values as D. P. has zealously made mockery of For it is hardly necessary to elaborate on the fact that as an anti-thesis to the expression of an individual's specific potentiality, “the Indian social life of bees and beavers” is standing in the way of planned development of India This is not merely a personal or familial attribute of the people to be dispensed with as of no consequence in the present or the future perspective.

## V

On all the above counts, however, it may be argued by a sociologist that a study of their traditional attachment would be purely academic, irrelevant in reference to social change. Because from our investigations into the immediate state of affairs alone we should be able to ascertain *what* exact forms these kinds of integration have taken today in the life of our people. And, thereafter, their association with particular aspects of the socio-economic-ideological structures of society should tell us *how* they are

functioning now. So, that should give us the clue to decide on how to bring forth the desired course of social change.

This approach would have worked, provided contingent associations between particular forms of integration and specific variants of the socio-economic-ideological structures of Indian society could have been established. But, by and large, that appears not to be the social reality. On the contrary, except for inconsequential instances or insignificant coverages, any such association is found to be distinctly lacking.

Such as, in nearly two decades since India became independent, her economy has gathered considerable momentum. Industrial production is now taking a greater share of the total national income than before, and, correspondingly, agricultural production a lesser share (CSO 1963, Table 2, cols 2 and 15). Pursuantly, urban expansion is proceeding at a rapid pace, drawing emigrant rural folks into the urban labour force in successively larger proportions (*vide*, Census figures for 1951 and 1961, *NSS Report 53*, 1962 Tables 1.1 and 3.2, etc.) Also appreciable migration within the rural horizon is recorded for persons in the labour force (*ibid.* 1962 Table 1.1). Even so, we cannot by-pass the fact that empirical studies point to the persistent parochial and intra-village factional features of Indian villagers (cf. Majumdar 1958: 324-330, Pakrasi 1962a; Singh 1961; etc.)

Thus we do not detect yet any contingent association between de-parochialization of Indian life and the urban and industrial development of India or urbanization of the countryside in the demographic sense.

Similarly, we do not find yet a distinct trend in the familial organization and ideology of the Indian people as different from that ordained by the joint family system. No doubt, certain sources of livelihood of the people have gained importance in the recent decades whereby they are induced to live outside their traditional abode and so may not be able to maintain the joint family organization as residential units. Or, economic devitalization may have compelled a joint family to split into several nuclear ones. Alternatively, the material and cultural amenities available increasingly to the people (and especially in urban and urbanized areas) could be

hypothesized to promote the break-up of joint families into nuclear. And the same could be said in reference to the rapidly spreading mass education in the countryside as well as in towns and cities. But either in the formation of co-resident and commensal units of kins and affines beyond those specified for a nuclear family or in the mental construct of the members of nuclear residential units the joint family system is seen to remain the dominant phenomenon in India irrespective of her rural-urban differentiation, the education and occupational profile of her people, etc (Mukherjee 1958b, Chapters 2 and 3 of this book, etc).

Indeed, the joint family system still maintains such a vital force in Indian society that some eminent sociologists are inclined to think that it has only realigned its structural configuration in the "new" situation and has not lost or reduced its function (cf. Nimkoff 1959: 34). Also it appears that while the joint family organization may be difficult to maintain in the urban ecological setting, its ideology is more heavily entrenched in that sector of society where the people are farther away from agriculture and craft production and are comparatively better educated (*vide*, Chapter 2).

Thus, in terms of its organization and/or its ideology, any contingent association is yet lacking between the preservation or destruction of the joint family system, on the one hand, and the variants of the present-day Indian socio-economic-ideological structure, on the other.

Lastly, to consider the caste organization and the caste ideology of the people, it is claimed that they received severe battering in the last hundred years from the legislative, economic and material changes taking place in India since then. Facts tend to support that viewpoint, so the high-lights of them may be recapitulated.

Namely, when in 1858 India became a Crown Colony, Queen Victoria proclaimed that Indians, "*of whatever race or creed*, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our services..." (Emphasis added—R. M.). Also, starting with the Caste Disabilities Removal Act XXI of 1850, there were several legislations during the British rule and afterwards which were to make serious onslaughts on the sanctions of the caste system. And, finally, "caste" was removed from the Indian census since 1950.

The economic and material factors in the same respect may not be so impressive as the legislative measures, but they could achieve a more positive effect. Such as, mobility from caste-occupations as imposed on society with the mounting crisis in her economy in the later phase of the British rule and as effected in a different context since 1950 with the implementation of the Five Year Plans, the Community Development Programme, etc. Or, the introduction of railways and other means of public transports to carry passengers to pilgrim centres and elsewhere, whereby the concept of caste-pollution could not work effectively. Or, the dissemination of "democratic" cultural values and "modern" material amenities to the people irrespective of their caste and creed.

These and similar features of modern India should have had levelled out the distinctions among castes ; at any rate, those associated "traditionally" with their economic organization and cultural make-up. But that we do not find to be the case (cf. Bandyopadhyay and Chattopadhyay 1963, Chattopadhyay and Bandyopadhyay 1963a, in press, Mukerjee 1957, 1958b, Mukherjee and Bandyopadhyay 1964, etc.)

Contrariwise, the cardinal fact remains, (over-riding those enumerated above and many others which could be enumerated) that the caste system went on maintaining its hold on the people barring an insignificant minority. Of course, it had to adjust itself to the "altered" conditions, and this it has done admirably with refurbished or original maxims and, where necessary, with a logical rendering of the situation peculiarly suited to its persistence. Such as, putting anew meaning to the traditional saying. *vr̥hat kāṣṭhe na doṣo syāt* (freely translated as "no pollution takes place on a large slab of wood") in reference to the inevitable situation of persons of various castes and religions sitting on the same bench of a third class compartment in a railway train. Or, accepting a Brahmin working in the production wing of a shoe factory as still preserving his caste; for the setting is totally foreign to that of a traditional cobbler.

Furthermore, the few contingent associations detected between the caste and the economic structure of society do not indicate how the caste system would lose its hold on the people. Instead, they demonstrate how the caste system has obtained a fresh lease of life

in "modern India (cf. Bailey 1958, Mukherjee 1957, 1961b, Srinivas 1962: 15-41; etc)

Indeed, the role of caste organization and caste ideology remains so important and obvious in the Indian scene that in respect of rural or urban areas, industrial or agricultural settlements, *haves* or *have-nots*, and even in reference to the non-Hindus, the phenomenon is discussed today in meetings, seminars and conferences organized by universities, research institutions, and public bodies

Therefore, centering round all the above three aspects of integration in the lives of our people, the questions crop up. *Why* is that so? *How* is it that we do not observe significant association between physical, material or cultural changes in society and its social organization or the ideological make-up of her people?

The situation is so incomprehensible that one can draw an analogy from Indian fairy tales. For the triad of village parochialism, joint family system and the caste system appears like a hydra-headed monster which has its soul hidden somewhere outside its immediate environment, just as the demons (*rākṣas*) had in the form of a wasp concealed within a crystal column built under the water of the lake round which they lived. And, therefore, as the demons could go on freely dominating the people — (king and his subjects, the rich and the poor, alike) — so can this monster irrespective of the changes brought about in India.

Furthermore, it appears that as in the fairy tale the spilling of blood of the live repository of the demons' soul could create many more demons instead of destroying them, so is the outcome of the present day changes in India with respect to this monster. Baljit Singh has hinted at that in respect of recent legislations on land ownership and the village life (Singh 1961). Srinivas noted the same more emphatically in 1957 in respect of "caste", bringing forth in the lime-light what was cursorily observed by Risley more than six decades ago in relation to "the great expansion of railways" (Srinivas 1962: 15-41; Risley 1891: I, xxx). And on the joint family system, similarly pregnant remarks are being made by sociologists — both Indian and foreign.

Quite evidently, we have not yet found the clue to decide on how to bring forth the desired course of social change. If we had, D.P. would not have had to tell us nearly a decade earlier that: "If

the address were to be delivered a few years ago my emphasis on the need of the study of traditions would have been much less sharp" ' And, following therefrom, his remarks made at that time have become more forceful today Namely .

"Indian sociologists should take courage in both hands and openly say that the study of the Indian social system, in so far as it has been functioning till now, requires a different approach to sociology because of its special traditions, its special symbols and its special patterns of culture and social actions The impact of economic and technological changes on Indian traditions, culture and symbol, follows thereafter In my view, *the thing changing is more real and objective than change per se* " (Mukerji 1958 : 241 Emphasis mine—R.M )

## VI

To be sure, there is a substantial reason behind our attitude contrary to D P 's. Namely, our touching faith in the economic development of our country to resolve all its evils. Thereby, we merely play the second fiddle to the bulk of planners interested predominantly, if not entirely, in achieving the objective of an economically prosperous India.

Today, it is not infrequently noticed, therefore, that even a well-documented study of "social" characteristics of our people or a penetrating analysis thereto ends, ultimately, in laying all hopes on the economic betterment or education of the masses. But if it were all that we can say in conclusion of our researches, we may as well retire from the field insofar as the planned programme of India's development is concerned. Otherwise, according to the present schedule, we shall have to remain as chroniclers of circumscribed achievements and as handy assistants to the prime movers in the field in diagnosing local, minor and casual evils ; — not the chronic and acute ones.

D. P., contrarily, asked us to assume a bigger responsibility when he referred to the limited success from "what we have done

through planning" (quoted earlier). Throughout his address he exhorted us to undertake the task of detecting the lacunae in developing the *motivation of our people* to the desired course of change. And this he did without undermining the fundamentally important role of economic forces in this context. For, it appears, he implicitly accepted the view that the issues like the triad of village parochialism, joint family integration and the caste system rest *ultimately* on the economic edifice that India built in the past

On this point, possibly there were over-emphasis either way, in stressing the economic or the non-economic factors in *producing* these kinds of integration in the lives of our people. But that the economic forces had a very powerful say in the matter, and that they played a vital role in *stabilizing* these kinds of integration in society, can hardly be doubted. So D P's plea should be judged, eventually, against the standpoint of relative relevance of the economic and non-economic factors in the perspective of a planned development of India and with respect to the implementation of such a plan in the *current setting*.

If we, therefore, wish to appreciate the Indian scene from this standpoint, we should note at the outset that controversies are there on whether the village communities in pre-British India were "closed" societies; and that in certain respects, obviously, there had to be contact between villages as well as between villages and urban centres. Such as, salt had to be imported in villages, taxes had to be exported to capital towns and cities, and inter-village contacts had to be maintained for kinship relation, marriage, etc. But such contacts need not have offset the predominantly self-sufficient, subsistent and autonomous character of the village communities, as adduced by Indologists and historians and as laid down in Hindu law books (cf. Mukherjee 1957; 1958a 140-174, for details). So that, the isolated and vegetative existence of the villages thus carried on for generations after generations, could lead to, stabilize, and preserve the life of their inhabitants in well-grooved traditional lines, centering round their place of origin, development and decay.

Indeed, evidence are there in India's history of such parochial, self-regulating, and virtually self-governing existence of village communities (*ibid*). It may also be argued that this very characteristic of all-India social organization (excluding some small frontier

territories) gave rise to one of the few common bases of "Indian tradition" in the midst of a *complex mosaic* of diverse ethnic, social and cultural elements. So that, as Charles Metcalfe put it forcefully, India witnessed the striking fact over centuries that here "Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down ; revolution succeeds to revolution ; Hindoo, Patan, Mogul, Mahratta, Sikh, English, are all masters in turn ; but the Village Communities remain the same" (Metcalfe 1830 : 331).

The parochial existence of Indian villagers has thus a history, a tradition. But this may not interest the planners on their immediate assignment, or they may not consider it as of any serious import. Because in the above formulation of the resistance to change the economic motivation to parochial existence of Indian villagers is strongly underlined. This was also stated explicitly by Marx as that the "structure of the economical elements of society remains untouched by the storm-clouds of the political sky" (Marx 1949 : 352). And this appears to be supported by the effects produced on the "village system" by the measures undertaken since the time of Sher Shah and Akbar — (particularly during the rule of the East India Company) — in order to break-through its autonomy, self-sufficiency and subsistence economy (cf. Mukherjee 1958a : 174-212, 300-378 ; Dutt 1950 ; etc). The planners may, therefore, argue that a developing economy of the country as a whole would solve the impasse.

Of course, we may recall that as late as in 1930 the India Statutory Commission made an observation the veracity of which cannot be doubted although we may contest the logic of the conclusion the commission drew therefrom. Namely : "Any quickening of general political judgment, any widening of rural horizons beyond the traditional and engrossing interest of weather and water and crops and cattle, with the round of festivals and fairs and any such change from these immemorial preoccupations of the average Indian villager is bound to come very slowly indeed" (ISC 1930 : 1, 15). But this point, again, may be countered by the planners on the ground that such a situation existed even during the last phase of British rule because the traditional economy had disintegrated by then but it was not replaced by a developing economy (cf. Nanavati and Anjaria 1944 : 74-75).



And it would follow therefrom that the parochial characteristics of the small town-dwellers as well as of the autochthones of large towns and cities also would disappear with the economic development of society. Because are they not analogous to rural parochialism at that stage of India's economy? Further. Do we not detect in this characteristic a situation similar to that in Europe in the pre-renaissance period when feudalism was about to collapse and a new society was in the offing? (cf. Max Webber 1934; Tawney 1948).

In the same vein, the joint family organization and the consequent mental make-up of the people also may be of only casual (at the most, secondary) interest to the planners. They may argue that these societal features need not assume any direct importance to a planned programme for India's development because the hold of the joint family system on the life of our people would disappear along with the successive development of our economy. For does not the system owe its stability to subsistence production in agriculture and handicrafts at a low and virtually unchanging technical level?

It remains a fact, no doubt, that where the techniques of production are poorly developed the exploitation of land or crafts would depend essentially on human labour. The labour could then be obtained communally or by employing bands of slaves, etc., according as the society is organized. But where the family (as a kingroup) is the *unit* of production and its appropriation, the organization of labour has to be on the familial basis. And, in that case, the greater the number of workers in a family the bigger would be its production and appropriation, provided the scope for the employment of such labour is there in the form of abundance of culturable area, etc., which the family may bring (or have brought) under tillage and possess thereafter under usufructuary or absolute rights of property. Hence, if the joint family organization is already in vogue or can emerge in contemporary congenial circumstances, it could best meet the demand and itself be stabilized in society through its economic function.

Situations of this and similar nature are noticed even today in some parts of the world; as for example in Africa (cf. Mukherjee 1956). For India, historians and Indologists have asserted this to have been the case from about the fourth century of the Christian

era (Kosambi 1955, Majumdar and Alteker 1954, Majumdar and Pusalker 1954, 1955, Nilakanta Sastri 1955; etc.) So that one may logically argue that, whatever may have been the origin of the joint family system, its persistence to date is merely due to the fact that it was nurtured by an economy which prevailed in the pre-British period of India's history and which has not yet undergone a total change.

Indeed, it could be pointed out that with the deterioration set in the traditional economy the joint family organization as forming locally-functioning *residential units* began to disintegrate under the British rule, particularly in its last phase (cf Chattopodhyay 1961; Mahalanobis *et al* 1946, Mukherjee 1958b, etc.). And it may be noted further that this phenomenon has become so palpably evident today that a discussion is now raging in India on how to define a "joint family" so that the *true significance* of the "jointedness" may be indicated. Namely, in terms of forming "joint" residential units, or exhibiting "jointedness" through the implied privileges and obligations of the joint family system, or the orientation towards "joint families" in the mental construct of the people, and so on.

A planner may suggest, therefore, that all that is needed is a dynamic transformation of the economic base of society which must do away with the life-force of this institution. To be sure, in the ideological make-up of the people the joint family system may still linger for a while; but certainly it would be doomed to decay, lacking sustenance. So that the vestigial remains of the joint family organization and the consequent ideology (as befitting its traditional moorings), or the various forms its structure may adopt in the transitional stage — such as forming a kingroup not prescribed for all its constituent members according to the patri-virilocal norm of residence (Mukherjee 1962) — should be regarded as of secondary, or of only incidental, importance to the planned programme for India's development.

Pursuing the same logic, it could be argued that whatever may be the origin of the caste system in India it could consolidate its forces through the operation of the distinctive feature of the village community system whereby each and every person, however high or low in the social scale, had a specific position in society

with indisputable stability of existence and clock-work regularity of repetition of their respective types for generations after generations (Mukherjee 1958a : 157ff. for details). And, thus stabilized, it could also react on the society and eventually govern it through its central principles of the doctrine of *karma* and the theory of reincarnation of souls.

On this point, we notice interestingly that Marx and Max Weber thought alike. Marx spoke of the transformation of "a self-developing social state into never changing natural destiny", and gave his opinion that : "we die besondere Art der Arbeit — die Meisterschaft in derselben und dementsprechend das Eigentum am Arbeitsinstrument=Eigentum — an den Produktionsbedingungen—, so schliesst es zwar Sklaverei und Leibeigenschaft aus, *kann aber in der Form des Kastenwesens eine analoge negative Entwicklung erhalten*" (Marx 1853 ; 1953 : 399-400. Emphasis mine — R M ). Max Weber stressed the stabilizing influence of the doctrine of *karma* and the theory of reincarnation of souls in the same respect, whereby not enough force could generate in society to disturb its ordained harmony (Max Weber 1947 : III, 248-249).

So the planners may argue that in a new economic set-up the caste system is bound to wither away eventually, just as it would be the case with village parochialism and the joint family organization and its ideology. And if the triad is still a palpable force in Indian society, it is only because : (a) her economic transformation has not yet gathered the required momentum, and (b) the degree of urbanization, as conceived by Gibbs, has not yet reached the critical point (Gibbs 1961 : 392ff).

On all counts, therefore, industrial and urban expansion of India, and urbanization of the countryside, become the main props to the planned programme for India's development at the moment.

But this policy orientation contains its own set-back. The soundness of stressing the fact of economic development of our country cannot be doubted. Concurrently, however, it cannot also be doubted that it is not all-inclusive of the factors seriously retarding the course of development. Because the factors like the triad of village parochialism, joint family integration and the caste system are not merely neutral to the envisaged programme for change.

They are putting up formidable obstructions to the very process of economic development, as our *a priori* knowledge and whatever empirical studies we have made so far tend to indicate.

On one side, there is the apathy of the people nurtured by these attributes. It forms a quagmire round the wheel of progress and tends to resist its movement. For the spread of material and cultural values distinguishes the people from their previous condition but it does not prompt them *ipso facto* to see the wood for the trees. Additionally, "family ties" endeavour to curtail or inhibit their initiative to participate enthusiastically in developmental programmes. And, above all, the "unworldly" outlook derived from the doctrine of *karma* and the theory of reincarnation of souls breeds callousness in the minds of the caste-ridden masses. The upshot is that fatalism, endemic in the circumscribed horizon of most of the Indians, ignore or distort the perspective of societal currents and even of the ups and downs in their lives.

Time and again the social reformers of the nineteenth century have underlined this state of affairs in India. Tagore in his novel *Gora* castigated this narrowness in Indian life which could be most appropriately described as "the frog in a well" in terms of the anecdote Swami Vivekananda related to his American audience in the World Congress of Religion (Tâgore 1909 ; Vivekananda 1893). But how little has it changed since then in more than half a century ? Perhaps only in developing a defence mechanism of the people in an "alien" world, as the Mesozoic animals did to check the movement of the wheel of history.

So we face today such curious facts that in an opinion survey of traditionalism in Indian and American families, "the American respondents seemed to hold more traditional attitudes than the Indian" (Hallen and Theodorson 1963 109) ! Is that opinion equated in practice ? Is there any semblance of relation between the two ?

Similarly, in the elections to the Parliament and the State Assemblies by universal suffrage, the polling is found to be spectacularly heavy. But when the "representatives" of the people pass laws against marriage dowry, pre-adolescence marriage, caste discriminations, etc., the people just do not take notice of them. In overwhelming majority, they go on running their business in well-grooved "traditional" lines irrespective of what they are asked

to do, what they say to others in the context of what would please their questioners, and what they do on such occasions as have no bearing upon their ordained existence.

We thus come across two worlds in India, of which I had the occasion to refer in the first chapter. One, of the people clinging to their traditional moorings as "a forgotten fact" and so professing or outwardly acting differently ; and the other, of the planners who wish, in the end, to usher in what D P. described as "the new traditions which the urban middle class have been trying to build up in the last hundred years or so" (quoted earlier).

That is one side of the picture. On the other side, these attributes tend to put the wheel of progress in the back gear. For they create, in conjunction, peculiar obstructions to the planned course of development in the name of village solidarity, familial obligations, caste/sect/religious fraternity, etc. Shorn off pious trimmings and eloquent verbiage to defend or apologize for their existence, they refer to such pernicious outcomes of village-kingroup-caste-wise "selections" as are obviously noticed today particularly in reference to the "modern" economic organization of society.

Moreover, this affects not only the top stratum of society where the management of "business houses", industrial concerns, etc., are located. It has permeated into the entire economic structure of "modern" society, whereby it refers as much to the recruitment of office personnel as, say, of the primary workers in manufacturing industries. To cite a few examples in this context would be invidious; especially when the phenomenon is known, and is also frequently referred, to have entered the political arena as well.

The planners could argue, of course, that this state of affairs may continue only so long as the technical demands of "know-how", etc., are low in society ; and, therefore, factors others than the intrinsic qualifications and ability of persons may count in favour of their employment. They may also point out in this connection that even the most "traditional" business establishments (such as of the Marwaris in the Burra Bazar area of Calcutta) had to employ totally "unrelated" but educated persons to keep their accounts, to deal with the "foreign" concerns, etc. And so they may conclude that once the traditional coterie of "selection" automatically disappears along with the developing economic organization of society

its manifestation in the political sphere would be extremely short-lived. For, as Trevelyan has said : Does not the Social scene grow "out of economic conditions to much the same extent that political events in their turn grow out of social conditions" ? (quoted, Mukherjee 1956 · 229).

But the question follows . Does the state of affairs conform to such a simple equation ? Interestingly, we first notice the paradox that this kind of selection of personnel does not operate in the entrepreneurial organization for agricultural or craft production. There the demand for "know-how", etc , as different from what the people learn traditionally from their ancestors, is virtually nil. Yet, as found for villages in Bengal, Bihar, etc , wage-labour is selected for the purpose according to the relative skill of the available hands to hire and not necessarily on other considerations (cf. Bhattacharjee *et al*, 1958; Mandal and Sen Gupta 1961 , Mukherjee 1958b ; etc.). Whereas, it is in the "non-traditional" economic set-up of society that the "selection" is effected on traditional lines of integration !

An easy and unilateral "economic" explanation of the situation, therefore, does not appear to conform to social reality. Instead, the social scene requires looking into *in depth*, and beyond its economic contours.

Furthermore, we cannot fail to take note of the fact that even if the "economic" explanation contains more than a grain of truth (which it evidently does), in the present situation this explanation would merely defeat its own purpose. For, may be as the demand for "know-how", etc., rises in all spheres of our economic life, it would be the intrinsic ability of the persons in the labour force (whether they are in the management, in the office or the store, and in the yard or the field) which would be the deciding factor in their employment and not their "relation" with x, y, or z. But the very presence of this problem does not promote either the demand for or the supply of technically qualified persons. Because a vicious circle is formed by the "traditional" cliques, on the one hand, and the consequent frustration of the able individuals, on the other.

Like the above, many other examples could be cited to denote that if we wish to be useful to society in reference to "The sociologist and

social change in India today", there are problems specific to ourselves. And these problems are no less important and urgent than those which interest the planners *prima facie*. Indeed, they may (and do) demand greater priority. Because invisible dykes are being built to obstruct the flow of the stream of economic progress ; and lacking a proper dredging of the bed of society, the accumulated filth mounting under the glistening surface of modernization and "cultural" improvements slows down the course of stream. Pursuantly, social change in India today becomes not an eventual but an imperative and topical necessity ; and the task of the sociologists is defined accordingly.

In this perspective, D. P.'s directive to study "Indian tradition" assumes crucial importance ; namely, "the study of the changes in tradition by internal and external pressures" (Mukerji 1958 : 232). For :

"The latter are mostly economic, and we know what they are. But the way in which the economic pressures work is not that of a mechanical force moving dead matter. Traditions have great powers of resistance and absorption. Unless the economic force is extraordinarily strong—and it is that strong only when the modes of production are altered, traditions survive by adjustments. The capacity for adjustment is the measure of the vitality of traditions. One can have a full measure of this vitality only by immediate experience. Thus it is that I give top priority to the understanding (in Dilthey's sense) of traditions even for the study of their changes. In other words, the study of Indian traditions, which, in my view, is the first and immediate duty of the Indian sociologist, should precede the socialist interpretations of changes in the Indian traditions in terms of economic forces." (*ibid.* Emphasis mine—R.M.)

A virgin field thus awaits our attention.





## Another Resume

In the first part of this book I have tried to emphasize the point that in order to appreciate eventually the *true* process of social change that is in operation in Indian society to date, our primary task would be an objective evaluation of the social facts. Because that evaluation would lead us to working hypothesis on *soft spots* in the social organism, testing of the hypothesis through “action programmes” or otherwise, formulation of subsequent hypothesis on their basis, and so on and on. Ultimately, therefore, we should be able to identify precisely the relevant soft spots through which the desired course of social change may be brought about in India today.

Pursuant to that conclusion, two questions came up for discussion ; one succeeding the other. (1) How to focus our attention on a social organism so as to identify the soft spots through which social change may be effected or expected to take place in due course. (2) Given the correct focus or focii of attention, what should be our orientation to the study of a social organism in the present context. These two questions I have tried to illustrate in the second part of this book ; the latter one being treated under two separate but complimentary perspectives, *viz.* (a) orientation to the contemporary situation, and (b) orientation for depth analysis.

The first question, of course, has been discussed deliberately in reference to a special situation (Chapter 5) ; so that the high-lights of the issue could be brought about in bold relief. But I may note contextually that in reference to ~~the~~ usual run of life in the

society also this question was taken up in Chapter 3 when an attempt was made to expose the deviant "social groups" in the industrial and non-industrial locations of a society. Therefore, from such discussions we may come to the general conclusion that we should focus our attention on the *field* (*viz* the social organism) in such a way that with respect to the *issue under reference* the investigation would bring out homogeneous segments within the field or the social organism, these segments behaving differently from one another, whether or not the course of behaviour is complimentary or contradictory among them.

To cite relevant examples in this respect, we may refer to the *clusters* or the two *classes* of "social groups" deduced from the analysis of data in Chapter 3; or the four categories of Calcutta refugees identified in Chapter 5 in terms of their emergence and subsequent behaviour in the society at large. Because the pattern of variation exhibited by these societal segments is likely to provide us with clues to diagnose the relevant soft spots in the organism and to formulate "action programmes" or "appraisal analysis" accordingly, as has been illustrated in the foregoing pages.

Now the pattern of variation noted above refers, obviously, to the distinctive roles of the societal segments. The identification, categorization and classification of these segments, therefore, depend on a symbiotic expression of the economic, social and ideological life of the people concerned. Otherwise, an unilateral or unequally emphasized appreciation of various aspects of the life of a people may defeat the very purpose to the investigation, as has been discussed in Chapter 6 in reference to the rural society of India.

Needless to say, the brunt of the discussion contained in Chapter 6 remains no less relevant to other sectors of Indian society. What has therefore, been labelled as "orientation to contemporary situation" receives a distinct importance within the purview of the present discussion.

Equally important is the "orientation for depth analysis", as has been discussed in Chapter 7. Because we are not concerned only with the "differences" observed within a social organism, which can be ascertained from a correct orientation to the contemporary situation. We have also to search for the static point or points in reference to which any observed pattern to "differences" in a *milieu*

may be interpreted as "change" or as mere "fluctuations". In Chapter 7, therefore, I have discussed the usefulness of the study of "tradition" in this context.

I must, however, reiterate at the end (as I had noted at the beginning) that in the light of the wide canvas of the problem I have brought up for discussion, I may have been able to scratch only its surface. Nevertheless, as I feel it imperative to initiate a discussion on the problem in view of the situation in India today, I undertook the task.

And all that I hope, therefore, in spite of the circumscribed treatment of the problem, is that the modest beginning of a discussion in this part of the book may have a far-reaching consequence in providing us, eventually, with the answers to the four questions I had raised in the Foreword (while discussing what is "change" and how can we interpret "social change" for India today) and in rounding up the discussion following from the first part of this little volume. Namely : (1) what is the point of departure, (2) what are the "differences" observable and observed in respect of that point, (3) how are these differences effected in society and what pattern emerges thereby, and (4) why does such a pattern emerge.



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# ERRATA

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